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# IRELAND:

## SOCIAL, POLITICAL, AND RELIGIOUS.

BY

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# IRELAND,

## SOCIAL, POLITICAL, AND RELIGIOUS.

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### PART THE FIRST (*continued*)

### CHAPTER III.

#### TITHES.

*Resistance of Catholics and Dissenters to the payment of Tithes.*

WE have seen, in the preceding subsection, that one of the sources of revenue in the Anglican church of Ireland is the right to tithes. This right has been recently exchanged for a rent-charge, levied on all properties without distinction, and the mode of payment has undergone important changes; but it still preserves its original character, which is also its radical vice—it is a tax levied on Catholics and Dissenters, for the exclusive advantage of the Anglican church.

It is easy to conceive all the angry passions that

must be produced among the Irish Catholics by this obligation to pay for the support of the clergy of a hostile faith: it is a tribute whose payment implies a sort of homage to the receiver, and to the superiority of the creed that he teaches; a tribute which the Catholics formerly paid to their own church, the church of the country, but which they are now obliged to offer to the ministers of a faith introduced by strangers. How could the Irish Catholics pay with any cheerfulness this debt to such creditors, which is not only an onerous tax in itself, but which wounds their dignity, and indeed can scarcely be paid without some remorse of conscience? This impost not only offends the Catholics; it also wounds those who, though Protestants, follow a different ritual from that of the Established Church, and who are indignant at honouring and supporting a form of worship which is not their own.

Finally, tithes are unpopular amongst the lay members of the Anglican church itself,[2] for in their eyes their own clergy are already sufficiently rich; and the payment of this tribute is deemed a heavy burden, which can only be sustained by raising the rent on their tenants, and thus augmenting their misery, and all the perils that such misery produces.

Need we be surprised if, in the midst of these almost unanimous sentiments of hostility to tithes, the Catholics, who are naturally the most hostile of all to this revenue of the Anglican church, refuse to pay it, and choose rather to submit to the legal consequences of their refusal, that is to say, to all the processes and

expense of judicial enforcement, rather than, by voluntary payment, perform an act that disgusts and degrades them?

Need we be astonished that repeated demands on one side, and perseverance in refusal on the other, should lead to collisions which first produce lawsuits, then secret hatred, and finally open violence?

When a people suffers from several forms of oppression,—when a great mass of evil is accumulated amongst this people,—when the grievances that this people sustain from the government are infinitely multiplied,—it might seem that if the people revolted, it would be in the name of all its miseries, that it would collect all its grievances as a support for its insurrection, and attack not one cause, but all the causes of its sufferings. It is not thus, however, that nations are accustomed to proceed in their efforts for deliverance; however innumerable may be the evils by which a people is oppressed, we may be assured that every explosion of popular passion terminating in a revolt, will adopt one principal grievance as the summary of all their grievances, as the representative of all the popular sufferings, and as the rallying point of all the popular animosities. Such a banner of sedition is incessantly offered, and will long be offered, to the popular passions in Ireland, by the demand for tithe, and the resistance it provokes.

When once the spirit of resistance has seized on all, behold how it proceeds; on all sides meetings are convened, speeches made, and resolutions adopted; the refusal to pay tithes is decreed by the popular voice,

nearly in the same words as the resolution adopted at a meeting in the Queen's County in 1831. "Resolved, That the tithe system is peculiarly obnoxious to the people of this county, being compelled to support in luxury and idleness a class of men from whom they receive nothing but their marked contempt and hatred."

Still, in despite of these hostile manifestations, the ministry of the Anglican church prepares to levy the tithes; it is the right of the clergy, the right must be enforced against all the debtors, but they unanimously refuse. The Anglican minister appeals to the law, at the same time that he claims the support of the public force. A process-server is sent to serve summonses on the recusants, and in order that he should not be impeded in the execution of his duty, he is escorted by twenty or thirty policemen in his perilous enterprise. This formality being accomplished, judgment is easily obtained against the defaulters. But they still refuse; they appeal against the sentence on some real or imaginary grounds; they plead, incur expense, gain time: the superior tribunal condemns them over again; still they do not obey, but continue to refuse payment. The Anglican minister, whose rights have been most solemnly sanctioned by law, sees that these rights will perish unless he has recourse to rigorous measures, and he resolves to employ them.

Preparations are made to seize the cattle of the debtor: they cannot be found; they have disappeared the preceding evening, and are concealed. Search is

made for them—they are seized—a mob assembles, and beats off the distrainers. The police force is summoned; scarcely is it on the road, when signals are made from the mountains, rallying cries raised, horns blown, to announce to the population of the neighbourhood the arrival of the constabulary force. These sounds are repeated by a thousand echoes, the distant cabins are agitated, the whole county is in commotion, everybody knows his place of rendezvous—it is that of the projected seizure. Peasants crowd to it from all parts; they consult, they encourage, they mutually stimulate each other to resistance: the signal is given, the constables approach, they arrive. Universal hisses, followed by an ominous silence, receive them. Aided by this imposing force, the officers of justice at length seize their prey. But whilst they are making out the schedule of the distrained property, the popular passion is inflamed, the sufferers are pitied; the wretched families, the wife and children, cling to their means of support about to be taken away; it is loudly proclaimed that these rigours, these miseries, and this sorrow, are the work of a minister of the Protestant church, whose opulence is to be increased by the blood of the poor Catholics: cries of horror resound; indignation and anger increase; terrible murmurs are heard, the storm rapidly advances, announcing its approach by the formidable threatenings of popular vengeance. In an instant, the public officers are insulted, menaced, and assailed with blows. Then a Protestant minister, who is also a neighbouring jus-

tice of peace, appears, reads the Riot Act, and orders the police to fire on the people. He is obeyed. From this moment the fury of the people knows no bounds. This population, that was deemed humbled and crushed because it was deprived of its arms, finds on the earth it treads terrible weapons to overwhelm its enemies. Energy and despair supply the means of combat, and, after a short struggle, half of the policemen remain on the place slaughtered by stones; the rest effect a retreat, leaving the crowd intoxicated by its unexpected success and sanguinary victory.[3]

It sometimes happens that the judicial sentence does not encounter such obstacles in its execution; the seizure is effected, but he for whom it is made obtains no profit.

The property of the debtor being placed in the hands of justice, it must be sold for the benefit of the creditor. Now the difficulty is to find purchasers. An auction is held, but there are no bidders; woe to him that would venture to make an offer. Frightful menaces are placarded against those who purchase any goods that have been seized for tithes. These menaces need not be written; they are in the clamour of the multitudes that surround the auctioneer and the public officers; and, written or vociferated, these menaces will not be vain; terrible examples to the contrary are within the memory of all.

An armed force may easily protect the legal functionaries in the seizure; it may resist, conquer, and exterminate the rebels, though subject itself to cruel reprisals; but what it cannot do is to make the mute

crowd round the auction break silence, or make a sale to those who refuse to purchase. Often, after many efforts, the distrained cattle and unsold goods are removed to the house of the Protestant minister, who keeps them until he obtains their price.

All sorts of expedients are employed to escape from this difficult conjuncture. Hoping that a sale might more easily be effected in a large city, the seat of government, the distrained chattels are sent to Dublin; but they are stopped on the road, tumultuous mobs assemble here and there, and soon in some struggle between the populace and the drivers, the latter are beaten, and forced to abandon their prey. Without abandoning this plan, other means are sometimes adopted for its execution. Every convoy of distrained goods is escorted by an armed escort from one police station to another. But when the seizure is offered for sale in Dublin, purchasers are not to be found, any more than in the rest of Ireland. It is like some pestiferous matter, whose contact everybody avoids; and whoever bids for it, is stigmatised with infamy; the newspapers publish his name, and popular hatred retains the remembrance. What then is to be done with these goods brought to Dublin, which cannot be sold? A last effort is made, they are transported across the Irish Channel, and, after a passage of a hundred and odd miles, they reach the port of Liverpool: but here their origin is quickly known; when they are offered for sale, no Englishman will sully himself by

the purchase; no one will offer a price which will go to pay Irish tithes.[4]

Let us acknowledge that, when public passion is exalted to this point, and is so unanimous in rejecting a legal right, this right may continue to exist, but its exercise is impossible. Rigour, violence, judicial decrees, distraints, sanguinary collisions between the army and the people,—all these means will be unprofitable and powerless. Much blood will be shed, but it will be utterly wasted; neither tithes nor their price will be paid. And what is still more remarkable is, that the power of the Irish people is not in open rebellion, but in passive resistance. The Irish insurgents of 1831 sometimes committed violent and sanguinary acts; there were riots against the police: Protestant ministers were murdered, and their properties burned; other cruel acts of vengeance were committed; but these isolated outrages, like those of the Whiteboys, produced no political effect. That which rendered the force of the revolt irresistible was its cold and calculating nature, its passive character, the universal agreement of an entire people to render the exercise of an iniquitous right impossible by the simple expedient of refusing to recognise it.

Often, in such extreme cases, the Protestant parson, daunted by these obstacles, abandoned his right. Sometimes he clung to it more closely, but then he encountered invincible difficulties; every step was impeded, everything around him hostile. As perils followed in his train, he soon found none to aid him in his

suit; neither attorneys, lawyers, nor witnesses: the magistrates, at first friendly, grew lukewarm, and began to abandon him; all were repugnant to severities which did not attain their object, and were perilous to themselves. The ground was taken from under his feet. *Then*, inspired by his interests and the sanctity of his unacknowledged right, he turned to the government, his last and highest refuge. "During the last year," he said, "I have not received a penny of the five hundred pounds due to me for tithes. My wife and children, like myself, have fallen into distress. I have been obliged to sell my carriage and horses." He then bitterly accused fortune, society, justice, his friends themselves. The ordinary magistrates, if he was to be believed, were insufficient; stipendiary magistrates were wanting; the public force was too weak; the police fought faintly; the army was unwilling to interfere; it was necessary to re-organise the yeomanry, and create a militia specially designed to act against the people. That is to say, it was modestly proposed that, in order to aid ten or twelve hundred Protestant parsons in levying tithes on six millions and a half of Catholics, and six hundred thousand dissenters, the army of Ireland should be increased by forty or fifty thousand men! Such demands could not be satisfied, and they were therefore disregarded. The Anglican clergy of Ireland were then heard to declare that government betrayed the cause of the church, and that the English constitution was in danger. They proclaimed

that society itself was attacked at its foundation; for what is a state in which law is disobeyed and property violated? Is not tithe as much the property of the minister as rent of the landlord? Does not the law command the payment of one as well as of the other? The church is accustomed as much as possible to mingle its cause with that of the laity, and to confound its rights with those of the community. "You refuse," said the clerical body, "the tithes to the minister, which are his right; how then will you complain if your tenant refuses to pay his rent?"

Assuredly this open resistance to law is a sad course of instruction for any people. But who, in the presence of the legal tyranny which we have described, will venture to maintain that a legal right is always just, and that every resistance to the law is criminal resistance? Who will contend that a nation, after having endured an enormous iniquity for centuries, has not a right to cast off the burthen? What is the use of discussing principles when the facts have invincible sway, and when rebellion itself bears the manifest character of morality and justice?

Is it not a sad and solemn spectacle, that of an entire people crushed by the double burthen of a social misery that knows no bounds, and a religious oppression that exceeds belief; driven by the excess of its physical sufferings to a continuity of individual outrages; and propelled by passion into an inevitable circle of general and periodic revolts; incessantly

borne down by the yoke of the aristocracy and that of the church,—by the exactions of the one, and the persecutions of the other?

When a stranger sees this emulation between the aristocracy and the church, rivals in tyranny, he asks which of the two excites most hatred in Ireland, and cannot determine whether the aristocracy is the more injurious to the church, or the church the more fatal to the aristocracy.

Sometimes disputes arise between the clergy and the rich, on which it would be difficult to come to a decision. "The church," say the landlords, "would be less odious to the people, if all ecclesiastical sinecures, which exhaust the resources of the country, were suppressed." "The rich should be forced to reside on their estates," say the clergy; "there would then be at least one Protestant family in every parish, and the office of an Anglican minister would be no longer a sinecure." .... "All the misery of the people," say the aristocracy, "arises from the cupidity of the clergy." .... "No," replies the church, "it results from the selfishness of the landlords."[5]

We may conceive an evil aristocracy whose vices would be corrected by a charitable and generous church. It is, moreover, possible to comprehend the existence of a church defective and full of abuses, but which, by its union with a good aristocracy, might still appear beneficial. But what must be the situation of these two bodies amongst the people, when there is a rivalry between them which shall produce the

most misery, and when each of them, hated for itself, is still more hated on account of the other?[6]

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## CHAPTER IV.

### SOME REMARKS ON THE NORTH OF IRELAND.

In the preceding chapters I have confined myself to general facts and principles, without taking any note of the exceptions; but I must now observe, that what is true of Ireland, taken as a whole, may appear inexact, if only an isolated portion of the country is considered. Let us cite an example.

In speaking of the Irish aristocracy, its nature and its vices, I have not distinguished between that of the south and that of the north. Still, if a person reflects on the elements of which each is composed, it is easy to understand that one cannot be in all points similar to the other.

I have said elsewhere that the population, which in the south is almost exclusively Catholic, is in the north pretty equally divided between Protestant and Catholic. In the north, as in the south, the landlords are Protestant; but with this difference, the Protestant landlord in the south has under him a poor

Protestant population; in the north, the landlord is in contact with inferiors, half of whom are Catholics, and the other half Protestants. The result is easily seen. As there is a moiety of the population with which the landlords have a community of religion, this part of the poor population suffers less in its relations with the rich, and endures less tyranny on the part of its governors. On one side, the landlords do not attempt to impose so severe a yoke; and if they did, their inferiors would probably not endure it, for they are the more enlightened and the more powerful. The rich Protestants of the north have also a motive to be less oppressive than those of the south; that is, their division into two sects, the one Anglican, the other Presbyterian. Now the same reason that induces rival sects to display a zeal for proselytism, is the cause that the rich man belonging to the Established Church, and he who professes the Presbyterian creed, endeavours, each in his sphere, to show himself a better landlord to his tenants, a more uncorrupt magistrate, and more impartial to those who appeal to his justice; and it may be remarked, that this favourable disposition towards Protestant brethren indirectly reaches the portion of the inhabitants that are Catholic; for they could not be witnesses of the progress made in the condition of the Protestants, without labouring to effect the same advancement for themselves. And it is more difficult for a Protestant to show himself rigid and merciless towards poor Catholics, at the very moment that he treats poor Protestants with humanity. This is sufficient to ex-

plain why Ulster is more rich and prosperous than the other provinces of Ireland. It contains fewer paupers, the inhabitants are better clothed, their food is of a superior quality, and the ground is better cultivated. It is true that the north is enriched by manufacturing industry; but we shall soon see that it is to the superiority of its social state that it is indebted for its industrial prosperity.

Besides, the north of Ireland is not quite so prosperous as always to have escaped the social miseries described in the preceding pages. It was disturbed by the Oakboys in 1764, and the Steelboys in 1772, whose insurrections were occasioned by precisely the same causes as those of the peasants in the south, and fully proved that the tyranny of Irish landlords is not confined to the south and west. "All the actors in this insurrection," says the biographer of Lord Charlemont, "were Protestants, either of the Established Church or Dissenters." But, after these violent insurrections, the social condition of the north was modified. As the oppressed were less unfortunate, they became less cruel in their vengeance, less fierce, because they were more civilised. "A revolt of slaves," says Lord Charlemont, "is always more sanguinary than an insurrection of freemen." But also these men, whose revolts were less cruel than those of the southern insurgents, took up arms for weaker causes than those which impelled the others to violence; being more enlightened, and less miserable, they suffered as much from a minor evil.

Purely social insurrections have long ceased in

the north of Ireland; they have become purely political; and this may be easily understood. We have seen what in Ulster constantly operates to diminish social oppression, and what in the south, on the contrary, tends to increase it; but a portion of the causes that produce these effects must, in the north, favour the growth of political passions and dissensions: in the south and west, the war is principally between the rich and the poor; in the north, it is especially between Catholics and Protestants: in the south, the Catholics are in such majority, that the Protestants can only struggle against them by legal texts; in the north, the parties are so equally divided, that each dispute may lead to an open engagement of brute force. The war is agrarian in the south, religious in the north. Thus outrages connected with the occupation of ground, or the vengeance of a tenant against his landlord, are far less frequent in the north than in the south; but in the north we more often find the assassination of a Protestant by a Catholic on account of his religion, false witnesses inspired only by religion, hatred, and the violence of parties. Before the tribunals of the north there is perhaps a greater display of passions between Catholics and Protestants than in the south; but at bottom the law is less hated, justice less odious, the judge less detested, because there are always great numbers who can love and respect both the judge and the law.

We can now understand the exceptional condition of the north of Ireland, where there is more political

than social misery; whereas, in the rest of Ireland, there is more social misery than political.

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## CHAPTER V.

GENERAL CONSEQUENCES FROM WHAT HAS PRECEDED. —CHARACTER OF THE IRISHMAN—EXPLANATION OF ITS FAULTS.

THE misgovernment to which Ireland has been subjected not only gives the key to its miseries, it explains, besides, the moral character of its inhabitants.

There exists in our days a school of philosophers which seems disposed to apply to nations the phrenological system which they employ to judge of individuals. Personifying all nations, and taking their skulls in their hands, they say to one, "The shape of your cranium indicates the passions that presage grandeur;" to another, "Nature has made you religious;" to a third, "You have been created for philosophy;"—"You have the organ of liberty,"—"You, the organ of servitude." And when they have thus felt the heads of all nations, attributed to one the genius of war, to another that of commerce, when they have proclaimed a third to aristocracy, and a fourth to democracy, they stop short, almost terrified at their prophetic power, for they believe that they have announced to nations the solemn decrees of inflexible destiny.

It is in England especially that I have heard these theories professed; and I am not astonished at it; for the English, who are a great people, have the most singular pride of birth that ever existed; they readily believe that the happiness and power of a people depend more upon its nature than its institutions; like those heroes who place more confidence in their destiny than in their valour.

I have never spoken to Englishmen of Ireland and its miseries without almost immediately hearing this objection: "Ireland complains of being poor—but what is to be done? Labour alone gives wealth; and the natural laziness of the Irish is an invincible obstacle to his labour, and consequently to the termination of his misfortunes. We shall never see industry prosper in Ireland. England is accused of keeping Ireland under the yoke: what a senseless complaint! The fickle character of the Irish must ever prevent them from possessing free institutions. Unfit for liberty, could they meet a more fortunate lot than to fall under the empire of a more civilised nation, which shares with them its glory and its greatness? The Irish, subjected to the English, submit to the law of nature: they are an inferior race."

This language always appeared to me the result of prejudice or injustice. I readily admit that there exist among nations marked differences of character and manners. I do not dispute that every people is endowed with certain peculiar inclinations, and certain faculties, which collectively give it a peculiar physiognomy in the midst of other nations. I grant without

difficulty that the Irishman and Englishman have very opposite characters, not only in their actions, but in their opinions and habits of thought. Let us take, for example, the most prominent trait in the English character,—that firmness of soul which presides over all its enterprises, that unalterable perseverance in overcoming obstacles, that steadiness which never abandons the task till it is completed. Assuredly we find nothing like this in the Irishman. He seems, on the contrary, naturally fickle and inconstant, ready to pass from despair to hope, from exertion to despondency. Full of ardour, imagination, and spirit, he wants entirely that consistency which predominates with the Englishman, and supplies the place of those qualities in which he is deficient. All that can be done at once, and by sudden effort, the Irishman will execute better than anybody else, because no one is more enthusiastic than he is; he rushes to encounter an obstacle without measuring the difficulties; but if he fails in the first attempt, he turns back and renounces the enterprise. It is assuredly difficult to find two nations subject to the influence of more opposite dispositions; and I am tempted to believe that there is something in the hereditary character of the one race which leads to boldness of enterprie, whilst the disposition of the other is, from its very origin, more cold and less expansive.

But still, may not what we attribute to descent arise from some other cause? Even if this opposition of inclinations actually arose from diversity of race, what inference should we deduce from it? Ought we

to conclude that the Englishman will never cease to be steady and persevering, and that the Irishman will always continue enthusiastic and fickle? Perhaps it is with nations as with individuals; the latter derive from nature diverse propensities, whose influence cannot be denied, but which, nevertheless, may be so powerfully combated by means of education, according as it is directed to good or evil, that the man naturally vicious may be rendered virtuous, and that the best natural inclinations may be depraved. Thus, after having demonstrated that any certain evil disposition is peculiar to a nation, it is further necessary, before pronouncing an anathema, to prove that this evil inclination might not be checked by some contrary influence. And when different faculties have been recognised in two nations, who is to decide which of these faculties gives the one a moral superiority over the other? Are the qualities of the head and heart to be weighed in a balance?

To deny the vices of the Irish people would be assuredly to contradict all evidence. The Irishman is lazy, mendacious, intemperate, prompt to acts of violence. He has notoriously a sort of invincible aversion to truth. If it is necessary to make a disinterested choice between truth and falsehood, he will tell the lie. Thus, he scarcely makes an assertion without supporting it by an oath; he accompanies every statement with "*upon my honour*," "*upon my word*,"—phrases familiar to those who habitually violate truth.

His repugnance to work is no less singular; he performs generally without pleasure, care, or zeal, what-

ever he undertakes to execute, and for the most part he is idle. Many miserable Irishmen add much to their misery by their indolence; a little industry and a little activity are alone wanting to alleviate their distress; but nothing can withdraw them from their apathy and carelessness; they seem contented with the mere display of their wretchedness, and to be almost insensible of their wants.

These are deplorable vices, but still more terrible remain. Violent and vindictive, the Irishman displays the most ferocious cruelty in his acts of vengeance. We have seen how the Irish tenant, who has been ejected from his farm, or whose stock has been seized for non-payment of rent, is led by revenge to reprisals tainted with the most atrocious barbarity. The punishments which he invents in his savage fury cannot be contemplated without horror.[1] Sometimes incendiarism and assassination are not sufficient; he inflicts lingering tortures on his victim.[2] He is often as unjust as he is cruel in his rage, and wreaks vengeance for the wrongs he has suffered on persons totally innocent.[3] He not only attacks the landlord or the clergyman on account of the harshness for which they alone are responsible, but his violence extends to the agent of the proprietor, to the new tenant, to the minister's proctor: he sometimes goes further, and carries off the wives and daughters of individuals, to punish husbands and fathers who are not themselves culpable.

These vices, these crimes,—I know them; I see them amongst the Irish, and I do not find them amongst

the English. Whence come these vices and crimes? From birth? NO! I reject as a monstrous impiety the doctrine which makes vice and crime depend on birth or nature. I never can believe that a nation has been predestined by the fatality of its origin to vice, and linked by its nature with crime. I never will be persuaded that God, who made man in his own image, and fashioned him in his own likeness, has created a people deprived of the power of becoming just and honest. I will never admit that he has refused moral liberty to this people; that is to say, that, in giving it life, he has deprived it of the conditions of virtue. Such an enormous injustice should be so irrefragably demonstrated, as not to be less certain than the existence of Deity, before I could believe it. But why should I admit it when it rests on no proof? Through what strange disposition should I attribute to the presumed injustice of Heaven an evil, of which I can clearly discover the causes upon earth?

Those who explain the immorality of the Irish by an original and hereditary taint, forget that during seven centuries this nation has been subjected to the most constant and the most merciless tyranny. We see every day the man possessing the greatest strength, and endowed with the highest moral energy, degrade himself, and fall into absolute physical weakness, under the influence of a few years of the rule of misery and corruption; and yet it seems we do not comprehend that six hundred years of hereditary slavery, physical suffering, and moral oppression, *must* have deteriorated a nation, vitiated its blood, and tainted

its habits. Ireland has been subjected to the yoke of despotism; Ireland must of necessity have been demoralised; the despotism was long, the demoralisation must be immense. You are astonished to find the morals of slaves amongst the descendants of a people that has endured six centuries of slavery: for my part, I should be much more surprised to meet the habits and dignity of a freeman in him who has never known any rule save that of servitude. When I see a nation that has had the misfortune to fall beneath the yoke, and remain in subjection, I do not inquire what vices it has, but I ask what vices it has not, and what virtues it can have.

Consider attentively the character of the Irishman, analyse his virtues and his vices, and you will soon recognise that every one of his dispositions, good or bad, is directly derived from the state of Irish society since the Conquest, and that this social state has either originated his inclinations, or at least given them direction and development. Taking this as your starting-point, you will not be astonished, on comparing Ireland with England, to find them so dissimilar.

The fickleness that is sometimes remarked in the habits of a nation, is sometimes the result of misery; and such a nation, though now unstable and frivolous, only wants to acquire wealth and freedom in order to become grave and steady. I know not whether the seriousness of the English belongs more to their institutions or their race. There is neither a nation nor an individual so devoted to pleasure as that one of them which does not work; the Englishman spends

little time in amusement, because he is engrossed by business. He has his rights and liberties to defend, whilst, at the same time, he has the wealth of the world to conquer. Would the character of the Englishman be the same, if he were deprived of his political privileges and the empire of the sea? I question it. I readily believe that under his cloudy skies he would never feel those soft sensations of languor, those invitations to repose and effeminacy, produced by the bright sun of Naples. But if it be true that the humid atmosphere in which he lives excites him more to action than the clear skies of Italy would, must we not acknowledge that his dispositions favourable to toil, produced by his stern climate, might be combated by political institutions which, instead of seconding his industrial inclinations, would restrain them?

See how his character is modified, despite of his race, according as he is subjected to different influences. Who in the cold, calculating, steady Scotchman of the present day, could recognise the poetical child of Caledonia, haughty, undisciplined, a rebel to all authority, descending from his mountains at the summons of his bards and his minstrels? Who in the midst of American democracy can recognise the Englishman, a friend to aristocracy? The Englishman in England wishes for liberty above all things; in America his darling object is equality. Who in the indolent planter of Carolina or Louisiana can recognise the Englishman unwearied in industrial toil? Look at France in the present day; do you deem that the character of its inhabitants is the same as it was

before 1789? Whence do these differences of habit arise, unless from the difference of laws and institutions?

If you do not lose sight of this dominion of institutions over the morals of nations, you will no longer be astonished that the English people labour, and that the Irish people do not. We find in the ancient chronicles of Ireland that steadiness at work was once one of the distinctive traits of the Irish people, of whom instability is now the principal character.[4] Is it not natural that the spirit of industry should be prevalent in a society where the profits of toil, secured by law, have always been a fruitless source of honour and comfort, sometimes of power and glory? And, for the same reason, is it not a logical consequence, that a nation in which industry has never been honoured, rewarded, or free, should be lazy and idle?

During centuries Ireland was declared incapacitated from becoming rich; positive laws bound her to poverty. What inclination, then, could be felt for labour from which no property could be derived?

Stripped of the rights of property, the Irish were dispersed over the soil, and condemned to till the ground for the profit of their masters. They obeyed the necessity—they did toil; but, like all slaves, they conceived an invincible hatred and disgust for labour; the Irishman hates his task, as every man does who works without pay.

Such sentiments, the natural offspring of evil institutions, cannot disappear on the very day that better laws are established. Whatever you may do now,

you cannot produce the deep instincts of property, nor the consequent love of exertion, amongst men who fifty years ago could neither purchase land, nor possess a horse worth more than five pounds.[5]

If the misery of the Irishman belongs not to his race, we may say the same of all the consequences which this misery has produced. Thus, this deplorable negligence, this absolute want of steadiness and care, perceptible in everything that he does, this recklessness, this total absence of self-respect, are the direct effects of his social condition. He feels that he counts for nothing in society, and that there are no means by which he may become somebody. If he wishes for work, he cannot obtain it without great difficulty; if any is offered, it is wretchedly remunerated; there is no order or arrangement in his mode of life, because all his means of existence are uncertain. He never attempts to look beyond the present moment, because his foresight enables him only to see evil in the future prospect. The question is not for him to choose between an unfortunate existence, the result of his indolence, and a comfortable life procured by his industry; he is sure to remain miserable; the only doubt is, whether he shall be more or less so: now this misery is so great, that the advantage of diminishing it by a degree is not worth the trouble necessary for his success. "We are so poor!" is the reply of the Irish peasants, when they are reproached with increasing their[6] misery by neglect; and they continue in the filth that chokes their hovels, without the slightest wish to keep them clean.[7]

Irish intemperance and love of whisky, one of the most deplorable of the national vices, arise from the same source.[8] As he believes it impossible ever to establish any durable accordance between his income and his expenses, he dissipates without scruple the moderate wages of his temporary employment.—Scarcely has he received his wages, when he runs to the whisky-shop, and, for some moments at least, drowns his misery in drunkenness and brutalization.

Thus, by the very condition of the people, all the vices usually produced by extreme misery are naturally explained. Thus also the secondary vices, which are the usual accompaniments of those I have mentioned, may also be explained; thus, the Irishman, precisely because he does nothing, boasts and blusters; as he has a master, he is a flatterer, and full of insolence when he is not cringing. These vices, indeed, add to his misery, but they were first derived from it. From the same source that his other pernicious inclinations flow, is derived that sad habit of falsehood, and that frightful predisposition to the most cruel and the most iniquitous outrages.

There is no need of a very deep study of the character and habits of the Irish people to discover that they are often deficient in the most simple notions of good and evil, of right and wrong.

In the midst of the terrible catastrophes of which this country has been the theatre since the twelfth century, in the tumult of the awful revolutions which have transferred the property of the soil into the hands of all parties in their turn, led to the triumph of the

most opposite political principles, elevated temples and altars for the most varied forms of worship; there has been formed amongst the Irish the most strange medley of ideas and opinions in morals, religion, and politics? Ascend to the origin of the tyranny, and what will you see?—men robbed of their property by confiscation, and reduced to the condition of labourers. Is this primitive act of violence one likely to confirm a people in the feelings of rectitude and justice?

Why has this spoliation been committed? Why, were the estates confiscated from the original possessors? Because the owners adhered firmly to their religious faith, and preferred the loss of property to the abandonment of their creed. Is it a moral instruction to witness the injury of the upright man, whose probity entails his ruin, and to see this ruin profit a violent and sacrilegious usurper?

This lucky usurper, attached by no sympathy to the Irish, whose race he abhors and whose creed he contemns, treats them with merciless severity; after having robbed them, forbids them to become rich; absolutely closes political society against them, hampers them in civil society, establishes a regular system of religious persecution, and thus organises the most anti-social system that ever existed. Can any one find lessons of justice in this frightful oppression, weighing for more than a century on unfortunate men, whose only crime was to be vanquished, and who suffered because they would not abandon their conscience to their victors as well as their country?

The principal and most cruel tyranny that Ireland

has had to endure, was that brought upon it by its creed. Does any one suppose that a man will derive sound notions of rectitude and equity from a government which he sees proscribing the religion which, according to his faith, is the only true mode of adoring God;—when he sees his mode of worshipping his Creator, in his view the first of all duties, raised into a crime; or when he sees his priests, that is to say, the men he venerates as the representatives of God on earth, driven into banishment—when, to hear the last words and the adieus of these proscribed holy men, he is obliged to shroud himself in secrecy and mystery under the most terrible penalties? Thus, in order to practise what is honourable and lawful, it is sometimes necessary to hide from human eyes; these duties are crimes punished by human law. There exist just actions which the law calls crimes, but which are not crimes!—Behold notions of morality which you may be well assured will bear their fruit.

Still this cruel tyranny runs its course; it crushes the people incessantly; all support it with equal energy: at length some despond and embrace the only means to assuage their misfortunes and alleviate their sufferings; they take oaths that their conscience rejects, they become renegades, and at once enter on the possession of the rights and privileges of which they have been deprived. Thus, apostasy, the greatest of crimes in the sight of the Irish peasant, is recompensed by the law. Thus, as there exist virtues of which human law makes crimes, there are also crimes which men agree to call virtues. . . . A second rule of morality,

which will doubtless greatly aid the Irish peasant to distinguish between right and wrong.

Troubled by all these contradictions, which pass the limits of his understanding; constantly seeing what he regards as justice, truth, and rectitude, falling under physical force; the Irishman takes the part of submission, and seizes on the only weapons which belongs to the feeble—cunning, falsehood, violence.

"Why," said he, sometimes, "should I not slay the man who has caused my brother's death? Why am I not master of the lands which my ancestors enjoyed? By what right does this man, who calls himself proprietor of an estate that ought to belong to me, eject me from the farm where I spin out a miserable existence?"—And sometimes a frightful act of violence is the conclusion of his reasoning.

But this violence is at once repressed by assemblies of his enemies that call themselves courts of justice, and where the organs of the law proclaim those deeds crimes, which a depraved conscience declares to be acts of substantial justice. Brought before the tribunal of his master, the accused generally defends himself by falsehood. His fellows are summoned to bear witness against him, they are sworn to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. Will they observe the oath? No, without doubt. In this case, perjury is honourable, and telling truth would be infamous; they give false evidence in favour of a man oppressed like themselves, and their conscience testifies that they have acted right. This false evidence is, in

its turn, declared a crime by those who derive their rules of morality from a different principle.

Sometimes a single individual opposes open resistance to the law; it is the powerless revolt of isolated misery: often several are associated in insurrection as they are united in wretchedness; it is not the vulgar war of a banditti against society which it still believes just,—it is a war waged against iniquitous laws, by men who think that they are so; it is the war of the Whiteboys. Finally, there are sometimes insurrections of the popular masses, as in 1641 and in 1798; then the ground itself quivers, and the entire social structure is shaken.

In every case, when the effort for freedom comes from one or from all, its moral effect, when it fails, is always of the same nature. Hence there is a terrible abyss for those minds which aspired to their own deliverance, and having made a vain effort, behold human justice in which they were ready to believe vanishing before their eyes; the chains of tyranny then fall with all their weight upon the people, as always happens when the slave who attempts to break his fetters falls again into the power of his master: this is the moment when the most fatal and depraving effect is produced upon the conscience; it is the hour that corruption chooses to penetrate the soul, and blight all that remains of virtue. Some who hitherto held out courageously against persecution and their interests, feel themselves falling; without doubt, they contracted many vices in this unequal contest, where it

was necessary to oppose force with all the petty means that are at the disposal of weakness; but still, while resistance lasted, the moral sentiment of duty survived all the efforts of corruption. This struggle ended, no tie any longer bound the Irish renegade to what was just and honourable; his degradation was consummated.

This total depravity only reached a small number; but perhaps there was not one who, even whilst adhering to his religious creed, was not tainted by similar corruption. All lost the love of truth, because frankness and veracity brought down certain persecution on their heads; almost all contracted the habit of lying, because falsehood during a century was a legitimate and necessary weapon. They assumed habits of outrage and insurrection under the influence of a tyranny which drove them into open opposition to the law. Now do not complain, if you find amongst the Irish a general aversion to truth, and an absolute love of falsehood. Can the Irishman, gross and ignorant as you have made him, draw with any discretion in his mind the line between the cases in which conscience may pardon a lie, and those in which it cannot be justified? How is he to distinguish, amongst the crimes established by law, those which are not crimes and those which he should regard as such? How is he to distinguish among the virtues which his enemies honour, those that are real virtues from those dependent on convention and form?—Grant that he honestly attempts to make these distinctions, which are often so difficult, do you think, after the bru-

talisation he has undergone, that he will have the delicate tact to distinguish in the midst of all these incoherences, truth from falsehood, justice from iniquity? Be assured, that after some efforts he will fail in such an attempt; though intending to reform his vices, he will keep them; he will be sometimes just and honest, but he will never be certain of being so, for he will have lost the standard of justice and honesty. In a given particular case, he will be tempted to tell the truth; still in the midst of the uncertainties of his conscience, deprived of every moral guide, and open to the suggestions of interest, he will end by adopting the lie; he will lie because he will not be assured that in this particular instance falsehood is less lawful than in other cases, where he has no doubt that falsehood is permitted. He will, perhaps, hesitate to commit some particular murderous outrage; but he will banish remorse, if he feels the temptation, by representing to himself the analogy between the projected vengeance and other sanguinary acts of vengeance, which he has been accustomed to consider as lawful deeds.

In the uncertainty into which he is thrown by this confusion of principles, he also contracts certain habits of violence, and his mind carries into this violence a certain methodical arrangement which he afterwards applies in all cases. Who does not see in the brutal practices of the Whiteboys, in their principle of doing justice to themselves, in their system of intimidation, the source of the outrages recently committed in Ireland by the trades unions?[9] A manufacturer takes four apprentices: "It is too much,"

say the operatives employed in the trade, and whom the apprentices injure by their gratuitous labour; "if you do not turn off two of them, we will have your life:" and when the menace was despised, the crime was committed. Dublin, in the year 1837, was the theatre of a thousand atrocities of this nature, committed by wretches who looked upon violence as their only resource, and thus destroyed the industry of the country, by which alone they could hope to be supported.

It is thus that persecution and tyranny corrupt nations; cease then to attribute to degeneracy of race the moral degradation of a people depraved only by bad laws.

This depravity, moreover, is not confined to the man of pure Irish descent; it has corrupted all those subjected to its influence, whatever may have been their original descent. The complaints of England against the Irish are generally known, because that two or three centuries after the conquest the English settlers in Ireland had adopted the manners of the natives, and become more alien than the mere Irish (*hibernis ipsis hiberniores*). The reproach was addressed to those of English as well as those of Irish descent, on whom the despotism of England fell with equal weight: they were corrupt, because they were equally bowed down by tyranny.

Sir John Davis, whose testimony will not be rejected by the partial friends of England, estimated that in his time, about three centuries and a half after

the conquest, there were already in Ireland more English settlers than natives, whence he inferred the absurdity of those who attributed the calamities of Ireland to inferiority of race.[10] Let Ireland be carefully studied, and it will be seen that the misery and corruption of the people are everywhere spread in the same proportion as the tyranny which oppresses each district. Ulster is less unhappy and less vicious, because it has been less persecuted.

There is another common error in estimating the Irish character, which renders all just appreciation of it quite impossible. The Irishman is usually compared with the Englishman, his superior in rank and fortune, his political master, his religious enemy. This is a certain source of error. To estimate the morality of a man, he must be viewed in reference to his equals. On this account, in order to comprehend the morals of an Irishman, you must not merely examine him in his relations with the superior Protestant class, but still more in his conduct to the Catholics, poor like himself.

See now to what an extent this Irishman, crafty and cruel towards the rich, is sincere and faithful to the man of his own class.[11] I have often heard the question asked, in all simplicity, how does it happen that the Irishman, often so treacherous and barbarous, exhibits on other occasions the most touching examples of humanity and charity?[12] The answer is easy. He is inhuman to the enemies of his creed and race, and charitable to his brethren, humble and

oppressed like himself. If you do not take this distinction as a guide to your observations, you will never comprehend the character of this people.

I have already said that in his blind vengeance the Irishman sometimes dishonours the wife or daughter of the person who incurs his resentment: it is, nevertheless, certain that the Irish are remarkable for chastity;[13] natural children are rare, adultery almost unknown. Whence arises this contradiction? Simply because the outrage is not dictated by lust, but is a means of vengeance employed against his enemies.

There is not, perhaps, one crime in Ireland which is not more or less tinged by the spirit and passions of party. Even the robberies that are committed partake of this character; even when dictated by cupidity, vengeance is never a stranger to their execution. Far different from the Spanish bandit, who, in the choice of victims, always prefers the traveller and stranger to whom he is unknown, the Irishman most readily attempts the life and property of those whom he knows. In no part of the world can a stranger travel with more safety than in Ireland.

From the foregoing, it appears that the Irishman is a complex character: he is composed of two distinct elements, which must be kept in view when his character is justly estimated; he is at once the man whom tyranny has endeavoured to corrupt during seven centuries, and whom, during the same period, religion has laboured to preserve pure.

All the faculties of his soul that despotism has touched are blighted; the wounds there are large

and deep. All of this part of him is vice, whether it be cowardice, indolence, knavery, or cruelty; half of the Irishman is a slave.

But there are recesses where tyranny has vainly endeavoured to force an entrance, and which has thus remained free from every stain; they are the parts that hold his religious faith. Attacked in all his rights, he has yielded them to force, all save one, that of worshipping God according to his conscience; at the very moment when he yielded himself wholly to the tyranny of his masters, he reserved his soul, and thus kept an asylum for virtue. He did more than refuse submission. His conscience was roused, and maintained itself for centuries in a state of revolt. This rebellion of the slave is liberty itself; hence came persecution with all its miseries, but hence also sublime devotion and sacrifice, the source of all moral greatness and resignation, the eternal power of the feeble. Thus, religion has never deserted his soul, nor ceased to defend its sound parts against the enterprises of despotism. It is by the aid of religion that the Irishman, in the midst of the greatest oppression, has never ceased to be a freeman.

## CHAPTER VI.

SUMMARY OF THE PRECEDING CHAPTERS.—ILLUSIONS OF THE IRISH ARISTOCRACY.

We have seen how a political cause and a religious principle have corrupted the aristocracy and its institutions in Ireland.

The Irish aristocracy, for the most part, does not govern at all, and when it governs, it governs badly. It wants the first condition necessary to the existence of a beneficent government, which is, to feel sympathy instead of contempt for its subjects. It is detested when absent; it is cursed when present; it possesses all the land in a country where the people have nothing but the land for their support, and immense revenues of which it never returns one farthing to the wretches from whom those revenues are raised. It possesses immense civil powers, and it makes such use of these powers, that neither government nor subjects recognise any proceeding but force, the one to impose the law, and the other to evade it. It has great religious privileges, which it has so strangely abused, that it has rendered its creed hateful among a thousand other objects of hate. Here are vices so great and enormous, that it may be said to possess nothing of aristocracy but the name.

But there is in this aristocracy something more

surprising and extraordinary than its vices; I mean the delusions by which it imposes on itself, the faith that it has in the holiness of its rights and the legitimacy of its titles, the indignation which it displays when the least of its privileges is disputed.

I will grant, if they wish, that after the conquest of Ireland, there were great obstacles to the fusion of the English conquerors with the natives; I will concede, if required, that after the reformation, the English, having become Protestants, felt a legitimate repugnance to unite themselves closely with Irish Catholics; I will go further, and taking into account the genius of the age and of revolutions, I will concede that the Protestant conquerors laboured sincerely for the conversion of the Irish to Protestantism, and that they practised, from pure conscientious motives, a persecution which is often attributed to interest. These premises being established, I will easily give up the consequences. I will, without difficulty, acknowledge that the great English lord who possesses estates both in England and Ireland, ought to prefer a residence in England to one in Ireland. I will go still further, and concede that he who is a proprietor in poor Ireland only, is so near happy England that he is strongly tempted to dwell in it. I can readily conceive his abandoning Ireland, such as it is in our days, a prey to a thousand intestine commotions, and devoured by a thousand evils which he found in the land at his birth: I will also admit, that being far from his estate and his tenants, it must be difficult for him to know the sufferings which it is

his duty to alleviate: nay, I will go so far as to concede, that the landlord who is kept at home in Ireland by mediocrity of fortune or any other cause, is less culpable in his oppression of a population that he despises and detests, in consequence of traditions received from his ancestors, than an oppressor would be who was exempt from these prejudices.

But what I cannot conceive is, that after two or three ages of useless persecutions to convert Ireland to the reformed faith, the Irish aristocracy does not clearly see that Ireland is destined to remain Catholic, and that persecution, exercised in vain, must have rooted in the hearts of the people the most profound hatred of their persecutors; further, what I cannot conceive is, that the great English or Irish landlord, who is merely a proprietor in Ireland, should pretend there to all the powers of aristocracy, should believe that he has a right to command his tenants to vote according to his pleasure, and when he sees them give an independent suffrage, should exclaim with profound grief, that the sacred bonds between landlord and tenant are broken;—it is impossible for me to comprehend how one man who does not reside on his estates, where he is wholly unknown, —or another who announces his presence only by rigour and exaction—the Irish justice of peace who resides habitually in London, but who comes on an occasional trip to sit on the bench of magistrates, and who, after having received his rents, will not depart without pronouncing sentence upon some Irish malefactors, — this justice of peace, whose decrees

excite no feeling among the people but hatred and indignation, whose incapacity is so great that he could not administer the law without the aid of the central power, and whose authority is so feeble that without British artillery he would not be obeyed,—this minister of the Anglican church, to whom the poor pay taxes, and from whom the poor receive nothing,—who has come to Ireland as a missionary, and is nothing more than an annuitant, and who, finding himself surrounded in Ireland by hatred and peril, goes to expend the five or six hundred a year derived from his Irish benefice at Bath or Cheltenham,—it is, I say, impossible for me to conceive how such persons, proprietors, magistrates, or clergymen, who do nothing for the people, should claim the privileges of an actually governing aristocracy—should, after having abandoned the people to themselves, be surprised to see them ignorant and famishing—should, after having treated the peasants as slaves, be astonished to find them vile and degraded, — and, after having been the voluntary or involuntary cause of these evils, should wonder at being hated. What passes my powers of understanding is, that, after having degraded their country to a degree of wretchedness unknown to any other people, at a time when England surpassed in prosperity all the nations of the world, these lords of the soil are indignant, because they do not enjoy in Ireland the popularity which the aristocracy possesses in England,—that, deprived of all conditions of existence, this nominal aristocracy should declare itself legitimate, regard its rights as sacred,

and its titles as inviolable; should rigorously claim the honour and respect with difficulty obtained by an enlightened, just, and beneficent aristocracy, and should raise the cry of impiety when the least of its privileges is attacked.

I am mistaken: these passions of the Irish aristocracy ought not to surprise me—they are natural;—does not he who is born a proprietor of slaves believe in the sanctity of slavery?.

## *How Ireland, aided by the liberties she received or acquired, has resisted oppression.*

The Irish, brought under the yoke, had received from their masters too many means of defence not to resist oppression. Let the political organisation of Ireland, from the time of the conquest to the present day, be investigated, and there will be found in it all the forms, and nearly all the principles, of a free government.

Doubtless there was more than one error in this liberal organisation, in the very midst of which might be heard the clank of the fetters of servitude; yet would it be quite just to assert, that in all the constitutional laws given to Ireland, there was nothing but odious hypocrisy on the part of the legislator? Assuredly not. We have already seen that these institutions were honest at least to the English Protestants settled in Ireland, who obtained from England rights which she could not refuse them; and

it was a great advantage to the Irish, bowed beneath the yoke, to have in the midst of them a society of freemen; for it is one of the sublime characters of liberty that it cannot be seen without being loved, and that, in order to be desired, it needs only to be known.

Let us add, in strict justice, that the Protestants, who doubtless at first desired their free constitution for themselves alone, could scarcely venture to refuse it entirely to the people entrusted to their charge, and that they conferred on this people certain political guarantees at the very time that they cruelly persecuted them on account of their religious belief. There was more good faith than is usually imagined in this assemblage of written laws and real oppression.

It is a phenomenon worthy of observation, that at the very height of his tyranny, an Englishman never departs from certain free principles inherent in his manners, habits, and even prejudices, which the logic of self-interest cannot always destroy. He enacts penal laws against the Irish Catholic, of unparalleled iniquity; but he deems that, in attacking Catholicism, he attacks absolute power, and that, while persecuting popery, he defends the sacred cause of liberty. Be well assured, then, that the same law which strikes the Catholic will respect the man, and that the citizen will preserve the rights of which the dissenter is deprived. The laws of the English Protestant place the Irish Catholic in a condition of social inferiority; but this is because an Englishman does not recognise an intimate connexion between

liberty and equality. Social inequality appears to him the natural state of things; he sees it established in his own country; but he does not believe it just to deprive those over whom he is placed of their liberty, accustomed as he is to exercise his own rights against those who possess a greater extent of privileges. Though he places himself in superiority over millions of Irishmen, he still leaves them considerable liberties: at the moment that he subjects franchise, eligibility, civil magistracy, &c., to an oath which the conscience of the Irish Catholics rejects, he does not deprive them of those general rights which education has taught him to regard as not less necessary to existence than the air he breathes, and the ground he treads.

Turn to the press; from the time that it became free in England, it has not ceased to be so in Ireland. Swift published his most virulent pamphlets against the tyrants of Ireland at the period when that tyranny was most terrible.[1] In 1797, amid the symptoms of approaching civil war, journals bitterly opposed to England appeared every morning; and a Protestant historian, the Rev. Mr. Gordon, who approves of the penal laws, is indignant at the thought of violating the sacred principle of the liberty of the press.[2]

Under the penal laws, the Catholics of Ireland could not assemble in their chapels to worship God according to their conscience; but they were free to hold public assemblies, and discuss the rigours to which they were subjected. The exercise of this right,

nevertheless, depended on the chief magistrate of the county, the sheriff, or, in case of his refusal, on a certain number of justices of the peace; but neither the sheriff, the representative of the central power, nor the justices of the peace, who belonged to the aristocracy, ever deemed it their duty to prohibit a meeting, because it was convoked for purposes hostile to their interests and their political passions. The rare examples of impediments offered to this right of holding meetings are considered as scandalous abuses, and stigmatised as acts of gross oppression.[3]

In 1792, at the moment when French democracy convulsed the world, Catholic Ireland was moved. Wearied of suffering in silence, the Irish people resolved to carry their sense of their wrongs and their desire for redress to the foot of the throne. In order that their wants should be clearly established, a general assembly was formed, in Dublin, of delegates from all the counties in Ireland; so that at the very moment when the constitutional parliament of Ireland, composed of lords and commons, held its sittings, and made laws for the country, another assembly, a kind of second parliament, was established in the same city, discussed all political questions, deliberated, adopted resolutions, published them, and was in fact the only national parliament.

What should the government do under such circumstances? Should it command a squadron of dragoons and a piece of artillery to disperse so dangerous an assembly? No: this assembly, though dangerous, was not illegal; before forming it, those by whom it

was convoked, investigated their right, and eminent lawyers declared that such a meeting was not contrary to the laws of the kingdom. And this was enough in a country distracted by party; those who had the law on their side tranquilly confided in their right, and though this right disquieted the *government*, it was respected.[4]

Who would believe it? At no period in Ireland has the principle of responsibility in the agents of power been set aside; and we find it remaining in full force in the midst of the most destructive troubles and revolutions. During the terrible crisis of 1798, a sheriff, grossly abusing his authority, caused a schoolmaster, named Wright, to be ignominiously flogged in Clonmell;[5] when the revolutionary tempest was passed, the sufferer brought his action in the ordinary courts of justice, and the sheriff's culpability having been recognised by the jury, he was condemned to pay five hundred pounds damages, and the costs of suit.[6]

The principle of a jury has never been contested in Ireland. Strafford, the greatest of tyrants, did not attempt to confiscate lands as forfeitures to the crown, without having recourse to the verdict of a jury, which he was not always able to obtain.[7]

In the breast of an English judge, notwithstanding political and religious prejudices, there are traditions of independence and respect for right, which are generally more powerful than his passions. Let us glance at the admirable scene in which Lord Kilwarden, chief justice of the King's Bench in Dublin, disputed with

the government the custody of a political criminal condemned to death. In 1798, Wolf Tone, the leader and creator of the united Irishmen, was taken in Lough Swilly, on board a French fleet conveying an army to invade Ireland: his crime was flagrant; he was taken with arms in his hand; he was bringing a foreign enemy into Ireland with the avowed object of breaking the English yoke, and proclaiming the country an independent republic. Dragged before a court-martial, he was condemned to death, and, according to the rapid forms of military justice, was about to be executed on the spot. The remainder of the impressive narrative will be best told in the words of Tone's son and biographer.

"On the next day, 12th November, the scene in the court of King's Bench was awful and impressive in the highest degree. As soon as it opened, Curran advanced, leading the aged father of Tone, who produced his affidavit that his son had been brought before a bench of officers calling itself a court-martial, and sentenced to death."

"I do not pretend," said Curran, "that Mr. Tone is not guilty of the charges of which he is accused. I presume the officers were honourable men. But it is stated in this affidavit, as a solemn fact, that Mr. Tone had no commission under his Majesty; and therefore no court-martial could have cognizance of any crime imputed to him, whilst the Court of King's Bench sat in the capacity of the great criminal court of the land. In time when war was raging, when man was opposed to man in the field, courts-

martial might be endured; but every law authority is with me, whilst I stand upon this sacred and immutable principle of the constitution, that martial law and civil law are incompatible, and the former must cease with the existence of the latter. This is not, however, the time for arguing this momentous question. My client must appear in this court. He is cast for death this very day. He may be ordered for execution whilst I address you. I call on the court to support the law, and move for a habeas corpus, to be directed to the provost-marshal of the barracks of Dublin, and Major Sandys, to bring up the body of Tone."

Chief Justice—"Have a writ instantly prepared."

Curran—"My client may die, whilst the writ is preparing."

Chief Justice — "Mr. Sheriff, proceed to the barracks, and acquaint the provost-marshal that a writ is preparing to suspend Mr. Tone's execution, and see that he be not executed."

The court awaited, in a state of the utmost agitation and suspense, the return of the sheriff. He speedily appeared, and said, "My lord, I have been to the barracks in pursuance of your order. The provost-marshal says he must obey Major Sandys; Major Sandys says he must obey Lord Cornwallis."

Mr. Curran announced, at the same time, that Mr. Tone, the father, was just returned after serving the habeas corpus, and that General Craig would not obey it. The chief justice exclaimed, "Mr. Sheriff, take the body of Tone into custody; take the provost-

marshal and Major Sandys into custody, and show the order of the court to General Craig."

The general impression was now, that the prisoner would be led out to execution in defiance of the court. This apprehension was legible in the countenance of Lord Kilwarden: a man who, in the worst of times, preserved a religious respect for the laws; and who, besides, I may add, felt every personal feeling of pity and respect for the prisoner, whom he had formerly contributed to shield from the vengeance of government on an occasion almost as perilous. His agitation, according to the expression of an eye-witness, was "magnificent."

The sheriff returned at length with the fatal news. He had been refused admittance into the barracks; but was informed that Mr. Tone, who had wounded himself dangerously the night before, was not in a condition to be removed. A French emigrant surgeon, who had closed the wound, was called in, and declared there was no saying, for four days, whether it was mortal. His head was to be kept in one position, and a sentinel was set over him to prevent his speaking. Removal would kill him at once. The chief justice instantly ordered a rule for suspending the execution."

Can any one say that all liberty is extinguished in a country where a judge, in spite of his passions, addresses such language to the agents of the executive power?

In times nearer our own, has not England been disquieted by storms gathering in Ireland, menaced

by the political and religious associations formed in that country; and have we not seen the right to associate constantly respected?

Parliament, on certain occasions, has suppressed this or that association, but it has never attacked the principle of right to associate. When the Whiteboys covered Ireland with their terrible confederation, a law was passed, defining their association, and inflicting upon it the severest penalties: in the same way the parliament treated all the societies that succeeded the Whiteboys; and when the association, without being actually criminal, appeared dangerous, parliament was contented with enjoining its dissolution. But never has the English government been seen, under the pretext that criminal associations might be formed, attacking in its principle the right of subjects to associate, interdicting the use, through real or pretended fear, of the abuse, or, what is still worse, pretending to regulate the right by making its exercise depend on official authorisation, as if the imposition of a necessity for authorisation was not a virtual denial of the right.

But what is the use of liberty, if it does not prevent tyranny? Be assured that it is still of the highest use: though it does not prevent oppression, it fixes its limits; it is a weapon in the hands of the feeble, and if you see a people unhappy, though in possession of liberty, you may well believe that without such liberty it would be more unhappy still.

There is one circumstance which is too often forgotten. The miseries endured by a free people are

known, because freedom publishes them: whilst in the countries of pure despotism, nothing is known of the sufferings of the people, for the tyrant conceals them with the more care, as they are the more frightful.

We should reject the most authentic evidence of history, were we not to recognise how much English domination in Ireland has been fettered and controlled by the free institutions given to that country. Perhaps there will be some persons who, seeing the English embarrassed in their persecutions by the rights given to the oppressed, will be of opinion that the persecutors were ill advised to create such obstacles for themselves. It is sad, I grant, for the friends of despotism to encounter liberties even amongst an enslaved people; there is doubtless cause for their surprise and chagrin. For my part, I deem this voluntary or instinctive sentiment noble, which disposes the oppressor to give his victim guarantees beforehand, and thus affix limits to his own tyranny.

These free forms, not useless for the present, will also be the source of safety for the future. The Great Charter, it is true, did not prevent the Tudors from establishing despotism in England; but when at length the English people, wearied of their despots, aspired to deliver themselves, they found all the resources of a free government ready prepared to their hands. It is thus that under the yoke of tyranny everything may be made ready for liberty, in the same way as it may happen that under a mild and free government everything may be prepared for servitude.

The jury, the press, the right of associating, responsibility of the agents of government, and the *habeas corpus*, are found in Ireland amid many arbitrary and oppressive acts; but is it not to these rights, always preserved, that Ireland is indebted for her daily conquest of the rights which are still wanting?

Ireland is doubtless very miserable, but she is farther advanced than is generally supposed in constitutional knowledge. There are many political questions still doubtful to many in France, which in Ireland would embarrass nobody. Never, for instance, in that country, would a person have a notion of demanding a political right without claiming a guarantee. Other countries more fortunate are less enlightened. Ireland resembles some invaded country, which, after a dreadful national struggle, has succeeded in expelling the strangers from its soil: it has learned all the arts of war and victory, but the land is covered with devastation and ruin: it is independent, but it is poor.

The poverty of Ireland did not vanish as its liberties were consolidated and increased. On the contrary, it would seem that, as the Irishman acquired political rights, his social misery was increased in the same proportion. It is certain that Irishmen have never been so free as at the present moment, and it is equally certain that they have never been so miserable.

It is a terrible truth, the proofs of which are abundant, that Irish landlords have never been so severe to the tenants and labourers on their estates as they

are at the present moment. This is easily explained: when the Irish peasants were placed by law in an inferior condition, the rich treated them nearly as a master does his slaves, whom he oppresses sufficiently to let them feel the yoke, but to whom he allows so much liberty as will enable them to enrich him by their toil. But this calculation, formerly made by the Irish landlord, is at present overcome by passion. Since his power has been contested, and the slave presents himself as a free man, the desire of again abasing him prevails over the interest of profiting by him. The small farmer, formerly deprived of political rights, is now an elector; he has been recently allowed to send Catholics to parliament; he votes at elections against his landlord; it is his right; but on his side, the landlord has a right to eject the tenant from his farm, and of this right he makes the most rigorous use.[8]

We do not now see two or three Protestants assemble in vestry to tax the Catholic population for the support of a form of worship which, as it only interests them, they should maintain themselves; but these two or three Protestants, the chief landed proprietors of the parish, wishing to lighten the burden which must henceforth fall upon them, eject Catholic tenants, and put Protestants in their place, who may support with them the expenses of public worship.

We have seen that there is a war between the rich and the poor, the governors and the governed; now, the more strength the poor acquire, the greater are

the fear and irritation of the rich. Oppressive laws are abolished, but the oppressor still remains; and in his rage for being despoiled, after having been so long the spoiler, he makes a terrible use of the powers which he derives from common rights. The situation of the rich is quite extraordinary,—no longer making the laws with whose administration they are charged; and this is one of the causes of their continually increasing rigour. Every new law conceived in a spirit more tolerant towards the Catholics, and more liberal towards the poor, appears to them an attack upon their authority as well as upon their creed, and therefore they make a more rigid use of the powers which they still retain. This disposition explains how it is that, with more liberty, the poor Irishman suffers perhaps more persecution; and how, whilst the country becomes richer, the cultivator becomes poorer. The land produces twice as much as it did fifty years ago, and the agriculturist is twice as miserable. Are we to conclude that the present condition of the Irish is worse than what it was fifty years ago? No. The miseries they experience are those which war brings in its train; they suffer, because they are in actual combat; but the struggle displays their strength, and I cannot bestow much pity on the slave wounded in the action that establishes his freedom.

And if, after having escaped political oppression, Ireland ever succeeds in rescuing itself from social misery, is it not to its liberties that it will primarily owe its success? Who can dispute the benefits which Ireland derives at this moment from the freedom of

the press alone? What but the press has brought into open day the vices of its social and political condition, —the press, whose voice, powerful even to deceive, is so strong when it is the organ of justice and of truth? Is it not the press that has unveiled in the Irish government and the Irish aristocracy excesses and iniquities which could only be perpetrated in darkness, but which its brilliant light has doomed to perish? Every day it reveals the evils of Ireland, which were not less unknown to England than the rest of the world; every day its merciless publicity proclaims them; and after having displayed in the eyes of the master the hideous wounds of the slave, it demands a reckoning for the still more hideous wounds of the freeman; and now that they are exposed, they must be cured. How is this to be done? I know not; but the attempt must be made, for their enormity demands a remedy.

## CHAPTER VII.

### AN EXAMINATION OF THE CAUSES BY WHICH IRELAND, AT PRESENT A FREE COUNTRY, TENDS TO BECOME A DEMOCRATIC COUNTRY.

In their resistance to political oppression, the Irish have triumphed. Now that they have learned the secret of their strength, will they limit themselves to defence? Will they not become assailants in their turn? Hitherto they have struggled that the guaran-

tees of the English constitution should be honestly granted them; but if it be true that the aristocratic institutions which content England cannot satisfy Ireland, will not the latter use the liberties belonging to the aristocracy to attack the aristocracy itself? That is to say, by the aid of institutions which were wanting, and which Ireland has conquered, she will have the power to reject institutions which she possesses, but which she does not wish to keep. The future is veiled from our eyes, but the past and the present are before us, which exhibit to us the most terrific storms gathering over the head of this aristocracy, the source of all the miseries of Ireland. And the perils that menace the Irish aristocracy do not arise simply from the fact that Ireland has reconquered its liberties, but that a certain assemblage of facts, principles, and accidents, combines to render this free society a democratic society. What are these facts, principles, and accidents? Some present themselves of their own accord.

The first is the great national association; the second, the authority of one great chief, O'Connell; the third, the power of the Catholic clergy; the fourth, the character of the Presbyterian sect; the fifth is the growth of the middle classes; the sixth and last, the nature of political parties.

### SECT. I.—*The Association.*

For every nation, as for every individual, held in slavery, there are two possible moral states,—discouragement or hope, despondency or energy, submission

or revolt. So long as the slave is not brutalised, he ardently aspires to break his chains; if he does not make the effort, it is because he is crushed by the weight of his fetters, and rendered incapable of effort; but from the day when his loosened bonds permit him to move, we may be assured that he struggles for freedom. The happiness of slaves has always appeared to me an odious lie and a cruel mockery. I esteem my fellow men too highly to believe in the happiness of the nation, or individual, that is tranquil in fetters.

Until 1775, Ireland was in the situation of the motionless slave beaten down or degraded; at this moment, "a voice from America shouted to liberty," which stirred the captive in his chains, and the master in his tyranny. I have already described the circumstances of this popular awakening, and especially the great assembly of the volunteers in 1778, the first association that was formed in Ireland. The struggle in which the volunteers engaged, and which produced the parliamentary independence of 1782, was not, however, national; it was a quarrel between the Irish aristocracy and the English government. The Irish aristocracy, which, during a century, had been at the same time a slave and a tyrant, had habituated itself to tyranny without becoming accustomed to servitude, and, whilst continuing to oppress Ireland, it wished to throw off the yoke of England. Its triumph was at first brilliant; but it saw not that, in enfranchising itself, it set a pernicious example to its own subjects; it did not understand that, in employing them to fight its master, it taught them to turn their arms against

itself. America instructed Protestant Ireland; that in its turn taught Catholic Ireland; besides, it was the time when revolutionary France proclaimed liberty to the world with a voice of thunder.

In 1792, the Irish people for the first time appeared on the stage in opposition to its two tyrants,—the Anglican faction established in Ireland, and England the support of that faction. This was the movement of the *United Irishmen*, the Catholics of the south, and the Presbyterians of the north, *united* more in their designs than their principle: more honest than rational in their alliance; it was the first truly national association, though still very imperfect; composed of the most heterogeneous elements, a medley of Puritan and of Popish passions, of Utopian philosophy and religious fanaticism, of American liberalism and French jacobinism; resting only on one common base, hatred of the English yoke, and desire for national independence,—a noble association, but ill defined, unsteady in its plans, vacillating in its progress, torn by a thousand intestine divisions, ready to make false estimates of its strength, and cherishing the illusions which terminated in the fatal insurrection of 1798.

Warned by this terrible effort for freedom, and arming itself against their rebellious subjects by the excesses which they had committed while wandering in the unknown, the two masters of Ireland forgot their mutual quarrel, and united, to separate no more. The Irish union of 1800 was far less a union between England and Ireland, than an alliance between the English party and the Protestant faction, which, being

no longer able to govern Ireland, threw itself into the arms of the master whose detested yoke it had shaken off twenty years before, and abandoned all the instruments of power and persecution, on condition of being allowed to retain its tyranny as in times past.

Twenty years of silent oppression were the price of this reciprocal engagement. But, during the struggle between its masters, Ireland had conquered too many rights, and in its unfortunate efforts for deliverance it had gained too many useful lessons, to remain for ever passive and mute in slavery.

It was a second time in association that Ireland found the secret of its strength, and the hope of its freedom. About the year 1823, the Catholic Association was established in Dublin on a new plan, and according to new principles.[1] The volunteers of 1782, the United Irishmen of 1792, were armed bodies ready to fight a battle, rather than associations formed by citizens for the defence of their rights. The first of these bodies, almost exclusively Protestant, could not represent Catholic Ireland; the second, in which persons of every religious denomination were mingled, had ended in terrifying everybody by its revolutionary tendencies and manifestos. The new association, established for the purpose of effecting progress without violence, agitation without war, resistance without revolution, attracted into its bosom all the instincts and all the desires of independence that Ireland still possessed.

When the government of a country is rooted in a nation, if popular storms are raised against it, we may

be assured of seeing it supported by a part of the nation, more or less considerable. Thus, when the aristocracy is attacked in England, finding amongst the people ardent and numerous auxiliaries, it doubts if it does not govern according to the wishes of the greater number; there are, to be sure, still powerful oppositions, but these are only parties in the presence of a government which is, or seems to be, the true representative of the country. It is far different amongst a people subject to an antinational authority. Thus, in Ireland, where the aristocracy is the enemy of the people, nobody resists whilst the government is strong: but the moment when opposition is free to declare itself, the hostility is universal, and the governing power, abandoned on all sides, falls into complete isolation. The opposition is then the nation, and the government a party or a faction. Such an opposition in the present day is the great Irish association.

But how can the government maintain its influence over an entire nation leagued against it? The difficulty is great, and, to comprehend its full extent, it is necessary to know all the democratic elements in the national association of Ireland. I therefore deem it necessary in this place to explain its plan, and indicate its character.

I am not sure that I have exactly caught its spirit and purport, but, in case of error, I cannot have recourse to the secrets and mysteries of this association, for all its operations were transacted in the face of day, and thus open to the judgment of all.

A central committee sitting in Dublin, and composed

of members whose mode of election varied according to circumstances, represents the association, and adopts the measures deemed useful to the common cause.[2] This committee assembles regularly, examines the laws proposed to parliament, discusses them, censures the acts of power and its agents, adopts resolutions, publishes them,—in a word, acts like a real parliament, wanting only the regular power of making laws obligatory on all. The association has a journal, which publishes its acts and decrees.[3]

Like all established governments, the association receives a tribute in return for the protection it affords; the amount varies; it is levied in different forms, but it is always sure to be paid. In 1825, the tax paid by each member of the association (the Catholic rent) was a penny per month, a trifling sum, but sufficient to establish a contract of authority and obedience between those who received and those who paid. The association had collectors to receive the rent, which was the more regularly paid as it was voluntary. At present, the association does not send round collectors, the contributions are paid in the form of individual subscriptions; a mere change of form, rendered necessary by the laws with which government from time to time has assailed the association. Thus, for instance, at first the members of the central committee were elected by the entire people; every barony sent to the capital of the county a certain number of electors, who named one or more deputies to represent the county in the central committee; so that the leaders of the association were in substance and form delegated by the

country. This form of electors was practised in 1792, but was prohibited by an act of parliament (*the Convention Act.*) This, however, did not prevent the association, in 1811 and 1825, from employing the same mode in the choice of representatives. But the decision of [illegible]y in 1811, and a new act of parliament in 1825, (called the *Algerine Act,*) having dissolved the committee of the association, and the association itself as illegal;[4] it was necessary to have recourse to a different form of organisation: at present, the association has no chiefs regularly constituted. Every assembly of the association is a separate meeting, which everybody may attend, the chairman of which is chosen every time by the majority of votes, and in which every person has a right to declare his sentiments.

But whatever may be the form, the substance is always the same; the name of the association varies, but there is no alteration in the elements of which it is composed. In 1823, it was called the Catholic Association, not because Protestants were excluded,—on the contrary, a great number belonged to it,—but because then the great object was to obtain from England the emancipation of the Irish Catholics. When the association was dissolved by parliament in 1825, it was soon re-formed under another name; in 1837 and 1838, it was called the General Association of Ireland; whilst I write it has taken the name of the Precursors' Society; and in a recent speech, O'Connell announces that it will soon be called the National Association.[5] Under these various denominations it is

always the same, that is to say, the real representative of the great body of the nation.

It is under this title that it commands Ireland, and is obeyed. At its summons, all the parishes of Ireland assemble; societies are formed in baronies and counties, in every place where the citizens are required to move: at the same day, and the same hour, all Ireland is up, occupied by the same object, influenced by the same passions, pursuing the same end. The purpose is to prepare a petition to parliament, but what would be the result if, instead of asking for petitions, the association demanded bayonets?

The association, formed by popular sympathies, has become every day more powerful by its victories. The famous election of Clare, emancipation in 1829, the revolt against tithes in 1831, the triumphs of the popular candidates at elections, are its undisputed works. Every one is more obedient in proportion as it gives proof of its strength and skill.

The association has made itself the patron of all the citizens; it stimulates and receives the complaints of every one who has a grievance against the public authority, against the ministers of the Church of England, and especially against magistrates belonging to the aristocracy. Since the association has covered the country with its shield, there is not in Ireland a poor peasant so weak or so isolated who has not the support of the entire body of the nation against the most rich and the most powerful oppression. Is the cupidity of any Protestant minister harsh and rigid

in the collection of his tithes represented to this body,—the association stigmatises him with public censure; and the fate of those marked out in Ireland for public hatred is sufficiently known. Has the poor man who owed the tithe been thrown into prison for non-payment,—the association raises the funds necessary to obtain his liberty. Whoever resists the payment of tithe, receives from it a moral and physical support. Once, in 1837, it received with loud acclamations a man sufficiently rich to pay his tithes, but who allowed himself to be dragged to prison rather than obey the law. [6]

But it is especially at the approach of an election that the association displays its power. Its first care is bestowed on the registries, and it defrays the expenses of registration when the electors are poor; and it objects to orangemen who have been unduly registered. When the day of election arrives, it issues proclamations to the people, to teach them their duties and their rights; it declares the reforms necessary to the safety of the country, and the pledges that should be demanded from every candidate for their suffrages; it loudly proclaims the names of those who alone have a right to popular confidence, tells each locality the representative that it ought to elect, his singular merits, his rare talents, his uncommon virtues; and not less openly declares the vices, servility, and incapacity of his rival. When the election is over, the association celebrates its victories, if it has triumphed, and, in case of a reverse, palliates its defeat. But its electoral labours have not yet

terminated; it publicly decrees praise to the citizens, formerly enemies, who have become friends in the late contest; and at the same time it mercilessly stigmatises unexpected desertions. It particularly applies itself to watch the conduct of the aristocracy: if a poor tenant is ejected for having voted against his landlord, the association comes to his aid, gives him an indemnity, and holds up the name of the landlord to general censure. It sometimes does more: at the Longford election in 1836, an unfortunate elector, who was in prison for debt, received from his landlord, who was also his creditor, the promise of being set at liberty if he would vote for the Tory candidate. The poor peasant, brought from his prison to the hustings, was, perhaps, about to yield to the seduction, when, at the moment he was about to vote, his wife exclaimed, "Remember your soul and liberty!" The poor peasant having voted according to his conscience, returned to prison. In a solemn sitting the association voted a silver medal to this heroic female, on which her noble address was inscribed, "*Remember your soul and liberty!*"

It is one of the peculiar characters of the association, that it not only keeps a watch upon the government, but exercises the functions of government itself. It founds schools and charitable establishments, levies taxes for their support, protects commerce, aids industry, and performs a thousand other acts; for as its powers are nowhere defined, its limits are not marked.

In truth, the association is a government within a

government; a young and robust authority, springing up within the breast of an authority aged, feeble, and decrepit: a centralised national power which grinds to powder all the scattered and petty power of an antinational aristocracy. It is not exact to say, that the association annihilates the aristocratic government of Ireland; for how can the name of government be given to the domination of a faction which can only maintain itself by the aid of foreign and physical force?

In a country where legitimate and regular powers existed, the establishment of such an association, if it could be formed, would be the very organisation of anarchy. In Ireland this association may become the principle and means of a political revolution, but in the mean time it is the most powerful social element that exists in the country.

Before the Irish association was constituted, the Irish sincerely thought that no temporal power merited obedience and respect, because it believed all human authority wicked and tyrannical. The association, which, be it remembered, governs Ireland, while subjecting the country to its power, and granting it protection, has taught that authority may be beneficent.

It is to the association that the Irish people owes its abandonment of the traditions of savage independence, and the adoption of social and regular habits. What a strange circumstance! The association which leads Ireland is the most factious of all powers; a day does not pass without its stimulating the people to violate some law; it prescribes to them as a civil duty the refusal of tithes, which are demanded by the

constitution; it devotes to public contempt and hatred the municipal corporations, which, nevertheless, are legally constituted bodies; it similarly assails the Anglican church, which is the principal institution of the country, and the aristocracy, the actual depository of the administrative authority; and, nevertheless, I repeat that the association gave the Irish people their first notions of right and legality. Before the association existed, and, consequently, before its counsels were heard, the people felt the same sentiments of hate against all that they are now recommended to hate; but the people were then blind and cruel in their resentments. The association did not change the inmost feelings of the popular mind; it left there all the hates which it deemed legitimate, and this has been the cause of its strength; it has enlightened those passions, it has taught the people not to stifle but to restrain them. The association has softened the popular propensities, and pointed out mild, peaceful, and strictly legal means to the popular passions, instead of the violent and criminal means to which the lower orders were accustomed to have recourse. It has taught the people to receive superior direction, and accept the empire of an authority entirely moral, in place of the gibbet, the only social power in which it formerly had faith. The association has not subjected the people to the rules of the law, but to a rule; and thus an element of order has arisen from disorder itself.

"I have been struck," exclaimed a stout peasant, who could have annihilated his adversary with a blow, at the

Waterford election.—"Why didn't you return the blow," said some one. "I thought that the association had forbidden it, or else——." Just before the Clare election, the association forbade the use of whisky during the contest, and not a drop of intoxicating liquor was tasted by any of the people.[8]

The association has not the power to prevent Whiteboyism, which is connected with social rather than political causes; but though it does not destroy it limits the system, combats it openly, disavows it, and prevents political passions from taking its direction and seeking such an auxiliary.[9]

Before the association came into existence, twenty Irishmen could not get together without some quarrel or outrage arising from their meeting: at the voice of the association tens and hundreds of thousands assembled peaceably on the same spot, and with the perfect order of a disciplined army, without the least dispute, or the slightest excess; and by these solemn demonstrations of a tranquil but menacing force taught England what she ought to think of barbarous Ireland.

But what appears to me most grave and worthy of attention in the Irish association, is the deep democratic character in this government of a people by one central power emanating from the universal will, expressed or understood; collecting within itself all the national elements; omnipotent by popular assent; absolute in every one of its actions, though constantly subjected to the control of all; levelling all above it, summoning to its bar all the aristocratic powers of the

nation; thus accustoming the people to social and political equality; a power fluctuating and varying, though perpetual, incessantly changing its name, form, and agents, though always the same; that is to say, a democracy organised in a country supposed to be governed by aristocratic institutions.

## Section II.—*O'Connell.*

The movement of the association is that of all Ireland; but this great work of the nation has special agents, and it possesses one so eminent and so celebrated, that I cannot pass him over in silence: I mean O'Connell. If the association guides Ireland, O'Connell rules the association. O'Connell exercises so extraordinary an influence over his country, and over England itself, that to omit him would be to neglect something more than a man, and almost a principle. It seems necessary, therefore, in order to give some details respecting him, that I should digress for an instant from the regular course of ideas with which I am engaged, but to which I shall be naturally brought back by this subject.

Every day, in our age, great men become more scarce; not because less great things are effected than of old time; but whatever great deed is now effected by the people, is the work not of one man, but of several, and in proportion as many agents contribute to a work, the glory of each individual agent is diminished. When in any country I do not find

any single man elevated above his fellows, I do not conclude that all the men of this country are mean; I should rather infer, that they have all a certain degree of greatness. Nowhere are great individualities more rare than in a country of general equality. Look at the United States; where will you find the common level so high with so few individual prominences? Ireland, with its immense miseries, its contrasts of luxury and indigence, with its large masses animated by homogeneous passions, was perhaps the soil best prepared to nurture the glory of a single man.

Is not the power of O'Connell one of the most extraordinary that can be conceived? Here is a man who exercises a sort of dictatorship over seven millions; he directs the affairs of his country almost alone; he gives advice which is obeyed as a command, and this man has never been invested with any civil authority or military power. I do not know if, in the history of nations, a single example of such a destiny could be found: examine, from Cæsar to Napoleon, the men who have ruled over nations by their genius or their virtue, how many will you find who, to establish their power, did not first possess the majesty of civil station, or the glory of arms? Would the name of Washington have reached us if that great man had not been a warrior before he became a legislator? What would Mirabeau have been without the *tribune* of the constituent assembly; or Burke, Pitt, and Fox, without their seat in the British parliament? O'Connell is, indeed, a member of the British parliament,

but his great power goes back to a time when he was not so—it dates from the famous election of Clare; it is not parliament that has given him strength; it is on account of his strength that he is in parliament.

What, then, is the secret of this power obtained without any of the means which are usually its only source? To comprehend the singular fortune of this man, it is necessary to go back to the political situation which was its starting point, and which is still its foundation.

After the fatal catastrophe of 1798, Ireland, cloven down, expiring under the feet of England, who crushed her without mercy, believed that henceforward she should renounce all hope of obtaining by arms the blessings, for the conquest of which she had so fatally revolted. She was then in the strange position of a nation, which, possessing some political rights, is menaced with their loss for having attempted to obtain by force those rights which were wanting; which, by an imprudent zeal to obtain complete independence, risks falling into complete slavery, and which, for the future, had no chance of obtaining new liberties, save contenting itself with those it possessed, and no longer disputing the rights of its master. Finally, after the union in 1800, it was more closely linked to England, which, holding Ireland as a rebellious slave, was greatly tempted to punish her, but could not do so without violating the engagements and guarantees, respect for which is so strongly inculcated by the British constitution.

In this conjuncture, what was necessary to Ireland?

It wanted not a general fit to lead an army, but a citizen capable of directing a people; it wanted a man whose ascendency could be established by peaceable means, fit to gain the confidence of Ireland, without, in the first instance, giving alarm to England; who, deeply impressed with the state of the country, comprehending equally its necessities and its perils, would have the great art of devoting himself entirely to the one, and incessantly avoid the other; a lawyer sufficiently skilful to distinguish what had been repealed in the code of tyranny, and what still remained in force—an orator sufficiently powerful to excite the ardent passions of the people against, and sufficiently wise to check their zeal when it verged on insurrection—a clever pleader, as well as a fiery tribune, employed in keeping awake at the same time the anger and the prudence of the people; impetuous enough to excite, strong enough to restrain, capable of managing at will a public assembly, stimulating or soothing popular passion; and who, having taught the people to hate the laws without violating them, was also able, when excesses were committed, to defend them at law, to excuse the authors, and to fascinate a jury as if it were a popular assembly. Ireland wanted a man who, while he bestowed his whole heart on her, did not cease to keep his eyes fixed on England, knew how to behave with the master as well as the slave, to stimulate the one without alarming the other, to press forward the progress of the former without troubling the security of the latter; who, strong in existing institutions, made them his shield for de-

fence, and his sword for attack; showed how one right summoned another right, one liberty another liberty; imprinted on the heart of every Irishman the deep conviction, that his want of independence exposed him to the severest tyranny, but was sufficient to conquer his complete emancipation; and after having thus disciplined Ireland, could one day present her to England as a nation *constitutionally insurgent*, agitated but not rebellious, standing up as one man, resolved not to sit down again until justice had been done. This man, for whom Ireland called, was revealed to her in 1810; it was Daniel O'Connell.[1] He could not appear sooner or later; for his production a country was required already free, and yet still a slave: there was wanting sufficient oppression to render authority odious, and sufficient liberty for the tribune of the people to be heard; there was wanting that singular accident of a tyranny supported by law, to give such empire to a man familiar with the laws, and who, from their skilful interpretation, could derive the liberty of the people and the independence of his country. Had O'Connell come fifty years before, he would probably have perished on the scaffold; half a century later, his voice would not be listened to in a country that had become more free and more prosperous.

Doubtless a providential interference assured to Ireland some great interpreter for her great misfortunes; but it was a fortunate accident for her that she met one so extraordinary as O'Connell. I am not one of those who believe that Ireland owes her being roused

from slavery to O'Connell alone. No; the passions, the inclinations, the destiny of an entire people, do not belong to a single man. No; it is not granted to a single individual, whatever may be his genius and his power, to be everything for his country. The great men who seem to conduct the age very often only give it expression; it is believed that they lead the world, they only comprehend it; they have perceived the necessities of which they constitute themselves the defenders, and divined the passions of which they make themselves the organs. We are astonished, when they speak, that their voice sounds so loud, and do not reflect that their voice is not that of a man, but of a people. If O'Connell and the secret of his power be studied closely, it will be seen that his principal merit is having undertaken the defence of seven millions who were suffering, and whose misery was an injustice. It is pleasant to think that resistance to iniquity is so noble a source of glory. But if O'Connell has not created emancipated Catholic Ireland, what other person could so well have represented it? If he has not alone imprinted on Ireland the great movement which has stirred it so deeply, and still agitates it, how can it be denied that he has prodigiously hastened and developed it? He has not, it is true, forged the weapons of liberty that Ireland possesses, but who could have wielded them so well as he has done? Who, in the presence of the necessities of Ireland, would have studied them so wisely, embraced with such profound intelligence, and employed in their service such vast powers of mind?

I have said that the interests of Ireland required a *constitutional war*, a peace incessantly agitated, an intermediate state between the rule of the laws and insurrection.

Consider with what art O'Connell organised the plan of this association, which was to become the mistress of Ireland, and had to be formed in the midst of laws designed to prevent its birth. It is at present confessed by all, that the Irish association owed its life and its daily preservation only to the sagacity of O'Connell, who having preserved it in the cradle from the attacks of the laws then in force, protected it subsequently from the new laws by which it was incessantly menaced, and finally extorted from his adversaries the confession, that "it was very easy to talk about arresting Mr. O'Connell, and bringing him to trial, but the difficulty was to catch him tripping, and to find a law which he could be formally accused of violating."[2] Finally, the association triumphed over all attacks; it was predominant; O'Connell became its leader; and what a leader!—what zeal!—what prudence!—what impetuous wisdom!—what fertility of expedients!—what variety of means!

Look at O'Connell when he appeared in 1825 before a committee of the House of Commons for investigating the state of Ireland; you must admire the lucid simplicity, the ingenuous candour, with which he explained the rigours that then pressed upon Catholic Ireland; not mingling a single word of bitterness with his recitals, speaking only of peace, union, and harmony, assuring his hearers that when once par-

liamentary emancipation had been granted, Protestants and Catholics, hitherto divided amongst themselves, but not enemies, would love each other like brethren; answering all objections, declaring all grievances, indicating a remedy for all evils, not leaving a single one of the miseries of Ireland in obscurity, nor one of its persecutions, and pronouncing, in the midst of a thousand designed snares and a thousand inevitable interruptions, if not the finest, at least the most useful appeal that was ever made on the part of an oppressed people.[3]

But this timid and modest man, who held such conciliating language before a committee of the English parliament, was the same whose formidable voice echoed through the county of Clare, and said to the people,[4] "The law forbids you to send a Catholic to parliament! Well, I am a Catholic—nominate me." This man, so recently moderate and calm, appeals to all the passions of the people, rouses all their sympathies, excites their most ardent enthusiasm, breaks with one blow the bonds by which the aristocracy held their dependents in subjection, separates Catholic from Protestant, tenant from landlord, servant from master, procures every vote, and leaves in profound and unforeseen isolation this aristocracy, quite stupified by the audacity and success of its enemy.[5]

The principal arms used by O'Connell in this constitutional war, of which he is the leader, are his speeches in parliament, the association, and meetings, his election addresses, and his letters in the newspapers. His parliamentary labours engage him half of the year; he

speaks on almost every occasion of public importance; when parliament is closed, he opens the sessions of the association, and supports the principal toil of debate; and yet these are not sufficient aliment for his inconceivable activity. Meetings, which, in Ireland as in England, are held for almost every purpose, and in which O'Connell rules, because he excels there, cannot satiate the thirst for action by which he is consumed. He never allows an opportunity to escape of declaring his opinion to the people, and exercising his power. Is there a general election? O'Connell directs it almost as a sovereign. He says to a constituency, "Vote for such a candidate;" to another, "Do not return such a one," and he is always obeyed. Informed that an election is doubtful in the north, he hastes thither, raises his voice, all-powerful with the Irish multitude, and ensures the triumph of the candidate he has supported; thence, without a moment's repose, he speeds to the south, where he has learned that another election is perilled; he fascinates and binds his hearers with a spell, procures the election of his son, his son-in-law, or some of his friends, and, resuming his journey as he steps down from the hustings, he arrives in Dublin precisely at the hour the association is sitting, in the midst of which his voice is heard more fresh and sonorous than ever. O'Connell is endowed with indefatigable ardour; when he has not occasion to act, he speaks; if he does not speak, he writes; his acts, words, and writings, are all directed to one common object—the people, and attain their end by the same way—publicity. There is scarcely a single

day in the whole year that the press does not publish a resolution, a speech, or a letter, from O'Connell.

What distinguishes O'Connell is not the splendour of any particular quality; it is rather the assemblage of several common qualities, whose union is singularly rare. It would not be difficult to find a more eloquent orator, a more skilful man of business, or a more distinguished writer; but the more brilliant orator could not manage public affairs; the man of business could not write; the superior writer could neither speak nor act. O'Connell, who probably would never have become distinguished by his writings, his speeches, or his political actions, taken separately, is at present the most illustrious of his contemporaries, because he is capable, though in a secondary degree, of all three at the same time. It is, however, only just to say that O'Connell was superior at the bar, and that in popular assemblies he is without a rival.

There is in O'Connell's fortune something still more surprising than its origin, and the means by which it was established,—that is, the duration of his power, a power entirely founded on the frail base of popular favour. Men may be seen who are great for a day, the heroes of a brilliant deed, the expression of some considerable event accomplished by them, or by the nation whose efforts they direct, and whose power usually vanishes with the great circumstance of which they are the representative; but what we find nowhere else is the continued empire of a single

man, who during twenty years has reigned over his country without any title, save popular assent, every day required, and every day given. This is, perhaps, the greatest and most glorious of all existences, but it is also the most laborious. The life of O'Connell is one perpetual enterprise, a never ending combat. Were he to abstain from writing, speaking, or acting, for a single day, his power would instantly crumble into dust. The man, whom his country has invested with the supreme magistracy, continues strong, and is obeyed; after he has become president or king, he may remain so in complete inactivity. But O'Connell at rest is nothing; his power is only maintained on the condition of incessant action; hence that feverish agitation by which he is distinguished, and which, it must be said, is the source of his happiness as well as his glory, for repose is inconsistent with his indefatigable nature.

If it be easy to conceive how continuous efforts are necessary to perpetuate this power, which dies and is born again every day, it is far less easy to comprehend how the person, to whom the necessity of incessant action is imperatively prescribed, should always find abundant elements of action ready to his hand. O'Connell excels as much in their discovery as in their management. Scarcely is one grievance of Ireland removed, when his vigilant eye discovers a new grievance, which is to become the text of his complaints; his tact in divining and antivipating the popular passions is quite marvellous; it is not that he forms thought differently from the rest of the

world, but he thinks quicker, and he says what everybody was going to say. Of all his faculties, the most eminent, no doubt, is the good sense with which he is endowed, by the aid of which he measures a difficulty at a glance, sees at once the best course to adopt, and judges so surely of the present, that no one is so close to the future. Such profound intelligence is clearly genius, and, of all forms of genius, the most beneficial to the people, when selfishness does not corrupt it at its source.

Many represent O'Connell in the character of an ardent and devout Catholic, excited by fanaticism to the defence of liberty. To judge how far this opinion is true, we should be able to read the interior of hearts, a power that belongs to God alone. Still, if it were permitted to hazard a judgment on the most impenetrable secrets of the soul, I would say that in this respect O'Connell displays more good sense than passion, more intelligence than faith. O'Connell speaks to Ireland the only language that Ireland comprehends; he judges Ireland too well not to know that nothing can be done except by the influence of Catholicism; and he would probably be an ardent Catholic from calculation, were he not so from religious faith.

Others, who only regard O'Connell in his political life, ask whether he plays a part, or acts from conviction. It is a doubt that seems very difficult to be admitted. There is not a mere hired advocate who, after having pleaded for some hours, well or ill, the worst of causes for the worst of clients, does not

become almost convinced of the sanctity of his cause, and is roused to zeal, and sometimes even to disinterestedness; and is it asked, if there be good faith and sincere devotedness in a man who for thirty years has defended the same cause—the cause of an entire people of a country which is his own,—a cause to which he has devoted all his life, and to which he owes all his glory,—the most equitable cause that has ever existed, and which he would believe just, even if it were not really so?

O'Connell is exposed to attacks which, if not better merited, are more easily understood. The declared partisans of passive obedience cannot pardon his liberal proceedings and his revolutionary tendencies; and those who regard an armed insurrection as the only remedy for the misery of the people, impute to him all the evils of Ireland, which suffers without revolting. It is plain that O'Connell's conduct cannot satisfy these classes. There is in the political principle which serves him as a guide in that intermediate doctrine between respect for the laws and aggression, a mixture that renders his character difficult of explanation, making O'Connell at one time a loyal subject, at another a factious partisan; one day humbled before the sovereign, the next, sovereign himself in some public meeting, half demagogue, half priest. To understand O'Connell, his character must be examined in this double point of view at the same time. O'Connell is neither a member of a pure parliamentary opposition, nor a revolutionist; he is one or the other in turn, according to circumstances.

His principle in this matter is formed by events; all consists in obeying or resisting with discernment. O'Connell, whose good sense always masters his passions, never aims but at that which is possible. Does he find public opinion cold on the subject of reform, he will pursue parliamentary reform with no weapons but those of pure logic and reason. On the contrary, if a subject be agitated which excites popular passions, and in which the nation feels a deep interest, O'Connell no longer limits himself to reasoning; he acts. He no longer simply invokes a principle; he makes an appeal to physical strength. Thus, in the time preceding emancipation in 1829, he had all Ireland on foot; thus, in 1831, he raised the entire country against the payment of tithes; observe, he raised, but did not arm it; he displayed menacing preparations, and waited until irritated power, by attacking him, would give him the privileges and advantages of defence. O'Connell knows wondrously the advantage to be derived from the shelter of law, and how far violence may be pushed without passing its limits; he deems it a folly for a people possessing liberties to abandon those potent arms, whose usage is legal and exempt from danger, to have recourse to insurrection, whose employment is so dangerous, and whose result is so uncertain. If O'Connell thought that a fair, open revolt would succeed, and render Ireland free and happy, he would assuredly become a revolutionist. He would have applauded the movement of the volunteers in 1778; but I doubt whether, in 1792, he would have engaged in the more

national movement of the United Irishmen. O'Connell has his soul and his memory stored with all the miseries that violent efforts for independence have brought upon Ireland; hence his constant effort to create what he calls *constitutional agitation;* that undecided system between peace and war, between submission and revolt, between legal opposition and revolt,—a system which, without doubt, does not confer on the people the benefits of a sudden and prosperous revolution, but which also does not expose the country to the awful responsibilities of an unsuccessful insurrection.

But whether O'Connell be considered as an ardent sectary or as the great leader of a party, a politician or an enthusiast, a parliamentary orator or a revolutionist, in every case we are obliged to recognise his extraordinary power; and what is especially remarkable in this power is, that it is essentially democratic. O'Connell is naturally, and by the mere fact of his political position in Ireland, the enemy of the aristocracy; he could not be the man of the Irish and Catholic people without being the adversary of the Anglican oligarchy. Perhaps in no country is the representative of popular interests and passions so necessarily the fierce enemy of the upper classes as O'Connell, because there is not perhaps a country in the world where the separation between the aristocracy and the people is so open and complete as in Ireland.

We must not then be astonished if O'Connell wages an eternal war against the aristocracy of Ireland. Nothing can restrain him in those attacks which his

passions suggest, and which his interests do not forbid. Nor must we be astonished if O'Connell, the idol of the people, provokes the bitter hostility of the higher ranks of society. There is not perhaps another man so much loved and so much hated. The resentment of the aristocracy against him is very natural; but woe to the Irish nobleman who, unable to disguise his hatred, provokes this formidable enemy!

Once at a public dinner, a noble lord, alluding to the tribute which O'Connell receives from Ireland,[5] called him "the big beggarman;" the next day O'Connell, at the association, spoke to the following effect: 'I have to tell you of a new attack made upon me by the Marquis of ——, who has dared to call me a mendicant. I should like to know what right he has to treat me in this way? Is it because I have sacrificed an income equal at least to the best of his estates, in order to devote myself more completely to the defence of my countrymen, and defend them better against an aristocracy whose only desire is to trample them in the dust? My fortune, perhaps, is different from that of any other man, and Ireland has done for me what no other nation has ever done for a private individual. Yes, it is true that I receive a tribute and high wages for my feeble services. I am proud of it. I reject with disdain, as I hear with contempt, the insults of this cowardly aristocracy, which would march over the body of the people, if it did not find me on the road. What are the claims of this Marquis of —— to public consideration? How did he get the large estates he possesses in Scotland? I will tell

you. His ancestor was Lord ——, abbot of ——, in the time of Knox. Betraying the trust reposed in him, he surrendered the vast possessions dependent on his abbey, after having first secured for himself a grant of two-thirds. Let us look at the origin of his estates in Ireland. How did they get into his family? Why, by the usual way in those times—by perjury, robbery, and murder. And here is a man, inheriting the fruit of such crimes, who dares to attack a person whose only crime is, that he has been chosen the defender of his country against the monsters who have crushed it for ages beneath the weight of their tyranny."

It is not merely by bitter sarcasms, invectives, and violent declamations, that O'Connell attacks the upper classes in Ireland, and upsets their authority; he overthrows their empire by the ascendency he has acquired over those who owe them obedience; he destroys their power by the dominion that he personally exercises over Ireland. By placing the people under a single central influence, derived from the assent of each, O'Connell has taught them to count as nothing the legal and traditional privileges which in an aristocratic government are supposed to be attached to name, birth, and social condition.

## Sect. III.—*The Catholic Clergy.*

But of all the social elements existing in Ireland, and which, favourable to liberty, contain also the

germs of democracy, there is perhaps none more fruitful, at least in the present day, than the Catholic clergy. If O'Connell is the summit of the association, the Catholic clergy may be called its base. But O'Connell is a man whose power must end with his life, if indeed the decline of his influence does not commence before his death. The clergy is a body that never dies.

The Catholic clergy is the most national body in Ireland; it belongs to the very heart of the country. We have elsewhere seen that Ireland, having been attacked at the same time in its religion and its liberties, his creed and his country were mingled in the heart of every Irishman, and became to him one and the same thing. Having been forced to struggle for his religion against the Englishman, and for his country against the Protestant, he is accustomed to see partisans of his faith only amongst the defenders of his independence, and to find devotion to independence only amongst the friends of his religion.

In the midst of the agitations of which his country and his soul have been the theatre, the Irishman who has seen so much ruin consummated within him and around him, believes that there is nothing permanent or certain in the world but his religion,—that religion which is coeval with old Ireland,—a religion superior to men, ages, and revolutions,—a religion which has survived the most terrible tempests and the most dreadful tyrannies, against which Henry VIII. was powerless, which braved Elizabeth, over which the bloody hand of Cromwell passed without destroying

it, and which even a hundred and fifty years of continued persecution have failed to overthrow. To an Irishman there is nothing supremely true but his creed.

In defending his religion, the Irishman has been a hundred times invaded, conquered, driven from his native soil; he kept his faith, and lost his country. But, after the confusion made between these two things in his mind, his rescued religion became his all, and its influence on his heart was further extended by its taking there the place of independence. The altar at which he prayed was his country.

Traverse Ireland, observe its inhabitants, study their manners, passions, and habits, and you will find that even in the present day, when Ireland is politically free, its inhabitants are full of the prejudices and recollections of their ancient servitude. Look at their external appearance; they walk with their heads bowed down to the earth, their attitude is humble, their language timid; they receive as a favour what they ought to demand as a right; and they do not believe in the equality which the law ensures to them, and of which it gives them proofs. But go from the streets into the chapels. Here the humbled countenances are raised, the most lowly heads are lifted, and the most noble looks directed to heaven; man reappears in all his dignity. The Irish people exists in its church; there alone it is free; there alone it is sure of its rights; there it occupies the only ground that has never given way beneath its feet.

When the altar is thus national, why should not the priest be so likewise? Hence arises the great power of the Catholic clergy in Ireland. When it attempted to overthrow Catholicism, the English government could not destroy the creed without extirpating the clergy. We have already seen how it tried to ruin that body. Still, in spite of the penal laws, which besides sometimes slumbered, there have been always priests in Ireland. The Catholic worship, it is true, had for a long time only a mysterious and clandestine existence; it was supposed to have no legal existence, and the same fiction was extended to its clergy. Even when the Catholic worship was tolerated, it was not authorised; it was only indirectly recognised when the parliament, in 1798, voted funds to endow a college at Maynooth for the education of Catholic priests. But now the Catholic faith exists publicly in Ireland; it has built its churches, it has organised its clergy, and it celebrates its ceremonies in open day; it counts four archbishops, twenty-one bishops, two thousand one hundred places of worship, and two thousand and seventy-four parish priests or coadjutors. The law does not thus constitute it, but the law allows it to form itself; the constitution affords it express toleration; and now the Catholic clergy, the depository of the chief national power of Ireland, exercises that power under the shield of the constitution. To comprehend this power, it is not sufficient to understand what their religion is to the Irish people, but also what their priest is to them.

Survey those immense lower classes in Ireland who

bear at once all the charges and all the miseries of society, oppressed by the landlord, exhausted by taxation, plundered by the Protestant minister, their ruin consummated by the agents of law. Who or what is their only support in such suffering?—The priest.—Who is it that gives them advice in their enterprises, help in their reverses, relief in their distress?—The priest. —Who is it that bestows on them, what is perhaps still more precious, that consoling sympathy, that sustaining voice of sympathy, that tear of humanity, so dear to the unfortunate? There is but one man in Ireland that mourns with the poor man who has so much to mourn, and that man is the priest. Vainly have political liberties been obtained and rights consecrated, the people still suffers. There are old social wounds, to which the remedy provided by law affords only slow and tedious cure. From these deep and hideous wounds the Catholic priests alone do not turn their eyes; they are the only persons that attempt their relief. In Ireland, the priest is the only person in perpetual relation with the people who is honoured by them.

Those in Ireland who do not oppress the people, are accustomed to despise them. I found that the Catholic clergy were the only persons in Ireland who loved the lower classes, and spoke of them in terms of esteem and affection. This fact alone would explain the power of the priests in Ireland.

The mission of the Catholic clergy in Ireland is the most magnificent that can be imagined. It is an accident, for to produce it there was required an aggregation of miseries which fortunately are peculiar to

that country. But the Irish clergy have not neglected their opportunities; an admirable career was opened to the priests; they comprehended its grandeur, and entered upon it with sublime devotion: there is no longer any doubt on the continent respecting the life led in Ireland by the Catholic priest, who, in the terrible war waged by the rich against the poor, is the sole refuge of the latter, and who displays, in combating the misfortunes of his fellow man, a zeal, an ardour, and a constancy, which the most violent and selfish ambition rarely exhibits in the construction of its own fortune. It appears, besides, that everything in Ireland conspires to exhibit the virtues of the clergy in broad relief.

What must be the feelings of the people when it compares its church, humble and poor like itself, and like itself persecuted, with the haughty and splendid Anglican church, supported by the state, whose power it shares; when a severe law compels them to pay that church an enormous tribute for which it receives not a farthing's value, whilst the little that it bestows upon its own clergy is fully paid back, with an addition of care and devotedness which cannot be remunerated; when, before the peasant's eyes, a Protestant minister, a stranger whom he knows not, occupies a benefice where he only takes care of his family, his pleasures, and his interests; whilst the Catholic priest, who has no family, no fortune, and no estate, who is the child of Ireland, and has sprung from the popular ranks, lives only for the people, and devotes himself entirely to its service?

What must he think in the midst of his vast and deep miseries, when every day he hears the rich, almost all of them members of the Anglican church, proclaim charitable almsgiving the greatest of all evils, and a source of demoralisation to the people, whilst the Catholic priest from the pulpit denounces those "who have this world's good, and seeing their brethren in need, shut up their bowels of compassion," and cease not to proclaim those words of charity, "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy!"

I do not here inquire whether the rich Protestant or the Catholic priest is better acquainted with political economy; but I am well assured that the mass of the people will take the language of the rich for that of an adversary, whilst the words of the priest, like the voice of a friend, will penetrate to the bottom of the heart. Who now can be astonished at the power of the Catholic priesthood in Ireland? This power has, besides, another foundation more solid than all the rest: in the same way as the Irish people has no prop but its clergy, the clergy has no support but the people. It is the people alone that pays the priesthood, and hence the double bond by which they are mutually linked together—by the bond of mutual dependence, the strongest of all possible ties. Let us add, that in this country, where all the superior and privileged classes are unpopular, the Catholic clergy is the only body more enlightened than the people, whose intelligence and power it gladly accepts. And this power is not purely social; it is furthermore essentially political. The free existence of the Catho-

lic church in Ireland is, perhaps, the matter most directly hostile to the principle of government which has prevailed there for centuries. It is not only a church raised by the side of another church; it is not merely a corps of curates, priests, and bishops organised in rivalry to another clergy, raising altar against altar, and preaching sermon against sermon. There is, in the present free development of the Catholic church in Ireland, the mark of a new principle, victorious over the old Anglican principle, which was once the very soul of the English government; the Protestant ascendency is vanquished; it is a political, far more than a religious principle, that has triumphed.

Thus, the Irish priest does not limit himself to aiding the people in its social miseries, he also protects them against the political oppressor; he is not content to be a man and a priest, but he is furthermore a citizen, and is not less attentive to liberty than to religion.

During a long period, the Catholic clergy, subjected like their flocks to persecution, had no other care but to withdraw themselves from it, and was humbled too much to preserve any power for protection; it concealed itself from the penal laws, labouring to procure for the people the spiritual succours of religion, and when it had succeeded in this object, its task was accomplished. Thus, when oppression was at the worst, the Catholic clergy kept themselves strictly within the pale of its church, and continued to shelter itself there when Ireland fought its first battles, and gained its first victories. The priests naturally remained

strangers to the agitation of 1778, which was a Protestant movement; and shortly afterwards, when the Irish Association made an appeal to the nation—they were at first deaf to its voice, and only lent it feeble aid, which was withdrawn when the clouds began to gather that presaged the storm of 1798.

When this dreadful tempest was passed, when the Irish ceased to be revolutionary and became constitutional, when ingenious modes of aggression were discovered, by which the fruits of rebellion could be obtained without encountering its perils,—immense perils, which the priest, anxious both for himself and his flock, keeps constantly in view—the Catholic priesthood in these conjunctures ended by warmly espousing the cause of the people; and from that day has been its most efficacious defender and the most formidable enemy of power. There has not been since a political crisis in Ireland, in which the Catholic clergy has not played an important part. It was the constant auxiliary of the association, whose acts and decrees it explained to the people. There has not been an election in Ireland without the Catholic priests giving their advice, not to say their commands, to the people. The priests take part in all the affairs of the country; they attend and speak at all public meetings. The priest is often changed into a tribune of the people, and the same voice that recommends, "to render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's," loudly proclaims, that it is the duty of every good Catholic to vote against the Protestant candidate, and that the most humble tenant should brave the severities of his landlord rather than

not give his vote according to his conscience. No one is now ignorant, that the success of the liberal elections in Ireland is almost entirely due to the influence which the priest possesses over the hearts of the people, and to his opposing the menaces of the rich and powerful, by the promises of heaven and the terrors of hell. It was on the proposal of the clergy that the association resolved to give an indemnity to poor tenants, ejected from their farms for an independent vote; and thus the Catholic clergy of Ireland introduced charity into politics.'

There is nothing, assuredly, in the traditions and principles of the Catholic clergy which would lead them to become enemies of established governments; and when difference of religious principle prevents an alliance, they in general abstain from hostility. Look at Prussia and Belgium. But what do we see in Ireland? Not only a Catholic clergy in presence of a government with which alliance was impossible, but a clergy against which that government waged a merciless war for three centuries, whose laws proscribed its worship and exiled its members; on which fell the most cruel persecutions, the memory of which is still alive in Ireland: a clergy, irritated not only by the evils which it endured, but perhaps still more so by the protection which the state granted to its most mortal enemy, the Anglican church; a clergy, in fine, which, always at war with the state, has never had any friend but the people, the poor people of Ireland, who, after having paid the landlord, the Anglican minister, the taxes levied by the state, the county, and the parish, found still a

trifle for the proper support of its priesthood.[2] Could any one desire, that when a struggle began, and continued during half a century, between the government and the people;—when, on a law, a tax, or an election, might depend the life, fortune, or liberty of all citizens;—when everything national was ranged on one side, and everything inimical to Ireland on the other;—when alternation of success and defeat invited every combatant into the lists;—could any one wish, I say, that the clergy, placed between this detested government and this affectionate people, should remain indifferent spectators of the combat?

No. Even if the Catholic clergy wished to remain neutral, it could not; but it has no need of doing violence to itself, to embrace the popular cause. The Irish priest of the present day is far removed from those doctrines of passive obedience with which the Catholic church has been often reproached, and according to which the people, bowed down under the most oppressive tyranny, has not the right to raise their head. We may judge of the spirit that animates the national clergy of Ireland, by the answer which Dr. Doyle, titular bishop of Kildare, made before the House of Commons in 1832, for there is no prelate whose name is more venerated by the clergy and people of Ireland.

Dr. Doyle had published a letter, addressed to all the Irish Catholics, exhorting them not to pay tithes to the Protestant clergy, and to maintain their resistance by all legal means.

Thus, said the members of parliament, before whom he appeared, you establish the right to resist law as a

principle; and what is to be the foundation of this resistance? The individual judgment of each private man is to decide expressly, whether law shall be obeyed or not. Can there be more complete anarchy?

"I think," replied the Catholic bishop, "that when abuses exist in a state, if individuals were forced to submit their judgment to the authority that protects these abuses, no kind of reform would be possible; and not only would the principle of passive obedience be established on the widest base, but a doctrine even worse than the divine right of kings,—the divine right of abuses. What progress was ever made in this country that was not the work of men pursuing justice in opposition to law? For my part, I know of none. The despotism of James II. was strictly legal. Even on the question of tonnage and poundage, the courts of law decided in favour of the crown. The revolution of 1688 was, beyond doubt, a violation of the British constitution, and yet it was the commencement of national prosperity. Consider Catholic emancipation. During fifty years, it was eagerly sought by Catholics, and many Protestants, and what a multitude of crimes has accompanied the opposition it has met; how many collisions, hatreds, and sanguinary fights? To speak of something still more recent, is not the present organisation of the House of Commons constitutional? No one, doubtless, will deny that it is so. Nevertheless, the king and the government are endeavouring to modify this institution which the law protects, and their plan of reform has been the cause of riots at Bristol and Not-

tingham. Who will impute these riots, and the consequent bloodshed, to the government? If a right must be renounced because the establishment of that right involves danger, it would be better to submit to despotism at once; you can never succeed in chaining down my intelligence to the letter of the law, so as to prevent me from pursuing the truth and justice pointed out by my conscience. Let us then take the principle of justice for our guide, and resist abuses as best we may; but let us not, because these abuses are mingled with a principle, sacrifice the principle itself. If we did so, it would be better for us to cease to live in society, and we should assuredly be unworthy of the free constitution which Providence has bestowed on these countries." [2]

Such is at present the language of the priest in Ireland. Thus, an element favourable by its nature to established governments is derived from a principle pregnant with liberty to the people,—the principle of political resistance which has become so formidable in Ireland, that it is asked what authority can maintain itself against it; but yet it is a principle which its adversaries dare not touch, because it is the only social safeguard of those whose political power is attacked. The Catholic priesthood is almost the only moral authority that the people of Ireland can consult: it alone teaches the people those rules of conduct in private life, which are the surest guarantees of honesty in public life; and even where its political passions are engaged with its interests, when it adopts the cause of the people, it endeavours,

while it follows, to direct the popular cause, and often succeeds. The priests have always condemned the principles and acts of the Whiteboys, and Dr. Doyle excommunicated them more than once. If, in the midst of its democratic agitation, the association succeeded in diffusing ideas of order and obedience to law amongst the people, it was because the Catholic priests were its immediate agents. If the rich landlord and the justice whom the people resist by the counsel of the priest are not robbed or murdered, it is to the priest they owe their safety. What a strange situation for an aristocracy, which, in order to preserve life and property, is in some degree obliged to abandon political power! What a singular destiny for a clergy, which, inclined towards authority by its instincts and its doctrines, has become the most formidable opponent of authority!

When the Irish priesthood, whose Catholic doctrine is not hostile to temporal power, goes beyond its first principle, it is naturally, and by an inclination peculiar to itself, the enemy of the aristocracy.

Christianity is democratic in its essence; it is the great source of the equality perpetually flowing and deluging the world. Christianity does not cease to be democratic except where it is directed from its natural course.

If the christian principle is the most democratic of all religious principles, it must be added, that of all the forms under which the christian principle is manifested to mankind, the Catholic form is also the most democratic. It alone passes the same level over all

men and all nations which it subjects to the empire of one single chief, the supreme arbiter of the human race. How then does it happen that the Catholic religion is sometimes the ally and friend of aristocracy? The reason is, that the body which represents the religion, the clergy, may be so organised as to lose its original character, and to assume another which does not belong to it.

Suppose a Catholic clergy endowed with great privileges; hence will at once result, the instincts, the passions, and the interests of all privileged corporations. Suppose that, coexisting with nobility in the state, it possesses rights and advantages analogous to those of the nobility; that, like the aristocracy, it possesses great political powers, immense estates, great wealth; a natural sympathy will be established between the two bodies; a constant tendency will lead them to approximate and form a close alliance, to league for defence, to unite for attack. Then also its instincts, passions, and interests as a privileged body, will remove it as far from the people, that is to say, the great masses, as its principles of Christian and Catholic equality brought it near to them before they were adulterated: and its distance from the people will increase proportionably as the other privileged body, its equal and its ally, holds itself more aloof; so that if the aristocracy should go to war with the people, the clergy, the primitive and natural friend of the masses, will become their adversary.

But it is easy to see that nothing like this can happen in a country where the Christian and Catholic

clergy possess no privilege and occupy no recognised rank in the state. Where, indeed, an aristocracy exists, but a Protestant aristocracy in the presence of a Catholic people; an aristocracy which, instead of attracting the national clergy towards it by parity of position, and thus inviting it to an alliance, on the contrary, rejects it with all the violence resulting from an assemblage of hostile passions, opposite principles, and contrary interests; in a country, finally, where all the principles, all the interests, and all the passions which sever the clergy from the aristocracy unite it to the people.

Thus, in Ireland, the clergy has complete authority over a people which recognises no authority but the clerical,—a situation very different from the case in which the clergy, united to an absolute monarch, is strictly kept within the limits of its spiritual influence, and from that where united to an aristocracy it has no political strength, but divided and unpopular. Here the Catholic clergy possesses a double authority over the priesthood, and exercises it alone. It is thus that a religious body, which we sometimes see the supporter of princes or the ally of privileged corporations, is in Ireland one of the most potent elements of liberty and democracy.

## SECT. IV.—*The Presbyterians.*

There is another element of democracy, which, though not Irish either by its origin or its nature, is

nevertheless found in Ireland, and exercises there a very marked influence. I mean the Scotch Presbyterians who came to Ireland in the time of James I., Cromwell, and William III.,[1] and settled for the most part in the province of Ulster.

The Presbyterian and the Catholic creeds, two religious adversaries, proceed from two principles directly opposed to each other, the first from liberty, the second from authority; the one subjecting every will and every conscience to a single conscience and a single will; the other leaving to each the care of forming his individual conviction by free examination. But these two principles, so directly contrary, have a common democratic effect, and by two different roads lead men to equality. According to the Catholic principle, all men are equal under a single master who levels all beneath him: in the Presbyterian church all are equal, because all are sovereigns. If a political and a religious institution could be compared, I should say that there is a very great analogy between the Presbyterian church and the constitution of the United States. In both, the authority is derived from the people and the majority, and ascends by degrees; the presbytery is the electoral district, the synod is the state, the general assembly is the congress. This is directly the opposite of the Catholic church, in which the authority springs from the head and descends to the people.

Assuredly the simultaneous encounter and development in the same country of these two democratic elements, so different in their nature, and yet united

together to effect the same work, are a very remarkable phenomenon. The Catholic and the Presbyterian religions in Ireland were equally separated by so many passions and prejudices, that a mere analogy between the political effects of these doctrines would certainly not have brought them together, if there had not elsewhere existed from the beginning another cause of union between them, and that cause was the presence, in the midst of them, of a common enemy, the Anglican church, the ally of the English government.

For a long time the religious rancour which animated one party against the other, was too powerful for political interest to unite them; and of this, history affords us a memorable example. In 1703, a bill was proposed in the Irish parliament, imposing the sacramental test as a necessary qualification for office. Now this bill, primarily directed against the Catholics, was framed in such general terms as to exclude not only Catholics but Presbyterians and all other classes of Protestant dissenters; nevertheless, the Presbyterians did not reject it: and by accepting it they showed that they preferred sacrificing their own rights to sharing them with Catholics. In this instance, political interest yielded to religious passion.[2]

At a later period, religious passions yielded to political passions: and those whom religion had separated were seen to unite in the common interest of national independence; this change dates from 1789. Already, before this period, the Irish Presbyterians had more than once manifested their republican and democratic inclinations. The great movements of 1778 and 1782,

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in which half of the nation appeared in arms, the popular conventions in which resolutions were carried by the plurality of votes, had as their central point the province of Ulster, and as their base the Presbyterian population. But a sectarian spirit then impeded the spirit of liberty; and, satisfied with obtaining rights and guarantees for Protestant Ireland, the Presbyterians of that day paid little regard to Catholic servitude. The French revolution imprinted on their minds wider and more generous tendencies. France spread over the world ideas of general liberty and universal emancipation, which found nowhere a greater echo than in Ireland, the most oppressed country of all. Still it was not amongst the most wretched, that is to say, the Catholics, that French liberty found the loudest echo; those most ready to adopt its counsels and instigations were the Presbyterians,—most attentive to its voice because they understood it best.

Thus, the whole Irish movement of this period was imprinted with the French character and the passions of France. They spoke in Ireland only of the rights of man and the sovereignty of the people; at Dublin and Belfast, on every 14th of July, they celebrated the capture of the Bastille; every victory that France gained over monarchical Europe, was to Ireland a subject of joy and an occasion for a national festival.—"Right or wrong," exclaimed the Irish people, "may France triumph! It is our cause that she defends, it is for ourselves that she fights; her cause is that of human liberty."

Acting under this generous impulse, Protestants who had hitherto shown themselves the most implacable enemies of the cause, became its most devoted champions, and displayed for Catholic emancipation more zeal and impatience than the Catholics exhibited themselves. All, or nearly all, the Protestants who then placed themselves at the head of the national movement, and by their junction with the Catholics formed the celebrated association of the United Irishmen, were Presbyterians.

Hence dates the first alliance formed between those mortal enemies the Catholics and the Puritans; hence, also, the first political schism in the Irish Presbyterian body; for whilst some hushed their religious passions, in order to listen to their political sympathies; others, stopping their ears against the voice of liberty which summoned them, clung obstinately to the yoke of their old hatred against Papists.

This division is still presented to us by the Presbyterians of our own day. Out of about seven hundred thousand, the number of the sect, there is nearly one half favourable to the democratic movement which the other half opposes. The latter have more hatred of the Catholic religion than love of liberty, and prefer rather to remain allies of the Anglican church, their political enemy, than unite with the Catholics, their religious enemies: the former, on the contrary, enter into a treaty with the Catholics, whose creed they dislike, through love of those political principles associated with the triumph of the Irish Catholic cause.

Whatever may be their apparent harmony, the libe-

ral Presbyterians and the Irish Catholics agree completely only in the war for which they are leagued; enemies at bottom, they have ceased to hate each other, for the purpose of hating together a common enemy: it is a union of passions far more than of doctrines. Both, it is true, oppose the government of the aristocracy, but the Presbyterians detest their power because it is linked with that of the Anglican church—the Catholics, because it is Protestant and anti-national. The Presbyterians are likewise Protestants and foreigners, and for both reasons ought to be odious to the Catholics; but the latter, at least for the present, forget the origin and creed of their Presbyterian allies, and see in them only useful and generous auxiliaries.

These auxiliaries afford considerable assistance to the democratic movement in Ireland. They are, it is true, but a small part of the great national association,[3] but they are the most enlightened and active section of it. It is worthy of remark, that never has any great event, any social or political crisis, any rebellion, prosperous or fatal, occurred in Ireland without the Presbyterians of Ulster taking the greatest share. They doubtless derive from their doctrines certain intellectual habits, which influence their political dispositions, render them unquiet and excitable, and impel them to take the lead in all agitations and changes.

Circumstances, besides, have rendered them peculiarly fit for the constitutional war which the national association, under the protection of the laws, wages

against the aristocracy. The natural tendency of their doctrine is, without doubt, republican. What, in fact, were the independents, the levellers, the "fifth monarchy men" of England, but Puritans who applied their religious system to politics? But the Presbyterians of Ireland, in whose souls the first accents of the French republic had given birth to so many hopes and sympathies, lost these illusions when they saw the republic in France sully itself with excesses for its preservation, and Ireland have recourse to violence for its establishment. Since 1798, the idea of an Irish republic has been quite abandoned by the most democratic Presbyterians, who, by this change, have become the best soldiers that modern Ireland could have for the legal warfare in which she is engaged. They bring to this contest all their spirit of liberty and progress; and it may be remarked, that while they have renounced pushing their doctrine to its extreme consequences in politics, they are more ardent than ever to apply the less extreme principles, and manifest more incessantly the spirit of liberty, progress, and democracy, belonging to their character.

It may be set down as certain, that this portion of the Irish Presbyterians who make common cause with the Catholics, is on the increase, whilst the hostile party is diminishing. Besides the political division existing among the Presbyterians of Ireland, there is in their church a more ancient cause of schism, which is purely religious. Those called orthodox, though physically separated from the church of Scotland,

always maintain a moral union with that body; now the Scottish church, though originally Puritan, has retained to some extent the principle of authority, since it requires from its members subscription to a profession of faith. The orthodox Presbyterians of Ireland are those who, according to this principle of the Scottish church, establish a system of doctrine which every member of their community must profess. It is, in general, amongst the orthodox Presbyterians, that opponents of the Catholics and their cause are found. The others, named Dissenters or Seceders, are those who, tracing the Protestant or Puritan sentiment to its origin, recognise no authority but the Bible, which everybody is at liberty to interpret as he pleases, provided he believes in its inspiration. These Presbyterian dissenters are sometimes called Arians, and have a great resemblance to the Unitarians of the United States, who are so numerous at Boston. It is these dissenters that we find zealous partisans of the democratic movement which every moment gains ground.

I do not examine here what there may be salutary or fatal in this development of the democratic principle of the Presbyterian church: there the great question of human liberty and authority is fairly mooted, —the two powers that dispute the world,—which it seems equally impossible to unite or to separate; which wage a continual war, as if the first could not succeed without the destruction of the second, and which yet are so necessary to each other, that each only finds its safety in the mutual opposition of both.

I confine myself to showing, that in the struggle that exists in the bosom of the Irish Presbyterian church, it is the principle of liberty that has the advantage over the principle of authority, and that the success of the dissenters over the orthodox adds to the number of the Presbyterians who are united with the Catholics of Ireland.

But is not this alliance between the Presbyterians and Catholics factitious and transitory? I am tempted to believe so. Take away the accidental causes of union, and I doubt if harmony would long subsist between such dissimilar elements.

In truth, there is every day in the two creeds a tendency to approximate both in ideas and manners. The Catholics of Ireland have long since rejected and daily disavow the superstitious doctrines and practices for which they have been most reproached by the Puritans. There is in the habits and preaching of the clergy of both a singular toleration, which is a fact if it is not a principle; Presbyterians and Catholic priests cultivate friendly intimacies: marriages take place between Catholics and Presbyterians, and the celebration of marriage, performed alternately by the ministers of the two communions, brings with it an exchange of courtesy and compliments. The spirit of toleration also diffuses itself with the march of time; a common warfare and common victories draw these first bands closer; and if this state of things continued for any length of time, it is conceivable that for the Catholics and Presbyterians united, there might result more than a momentary alliance of passions and in-

terests: each creed, in the long run, might be so modified, that a durable agreement between them would not be impossible.

Still the Catholic principle and the Presbyterian principle are as much opposed to each other as the two eternal adversaries, liberty and authority. How then could they establish a sincere and durable union? I doubt whether this fusion can ever be accomplished, for nothing is so implacable as a principle. The Arians of Ireland, like the Unitarians of America, are the real adversaries of Catholicism. They are the philosophers of the Protestant church; happy philosophers beyond doubt, who have been able to graft their philosophy on a christian branch; surprising philosophers, by a singular mixture of passion and toleration, of intellectual boldness and faith; primitive Christians and modern philosophers; believing in the divinity of Jesus Christ, like Bossuet, and in other respects sceptics, like Voltaire; fervent as the Puritans of Cromwell, mild and tolerant as the disciples of Fenelon. Which of these two principles that dispute their soul will finally prevail? Will it be faith? Will it be doubt? How far will doubt lead them? Will it always stop at the divine origin of the Bible, a limit which it has not passed as yet? But whatever may be the amount of Christianity that they will retain, it is certain that their principle is examination, and their method doubt. Now this is precisely the principle most opposed to that of the Catholic church.

It is, then, probable, that when the Presbyterians

and Catholics of Ireland will be no longer kept united by the presence of an enemy, they will divide and renew the war.

These views of the future are merely conjectural; but what is at present certain, is the immense power that Irish democracy derives from the existing union.

## Sect. V. *The Middle Classes.*

There exists in Ireland another principle of democracy, and in which the two last noticed seem to be contained, that is, the growth of middle classes. To this middle class belong all the remarkable men of the great national association that has been formed against the aristocracy and against the government. O'Connell is a lawyer who derived his first power from the bar; the Catholic clergy recruits its members among the farmers and tradesmen, and that part of the Presbyterians of Ulster which we find at the head of the intellectual and liberal movement in their sect, is composed for the most part of small landholders and fundholders, recently enriched by commerce.

The absence of a middle class in Ireland has been, and is still, one of the greatest misfortunes of the country. When a people has the misfortune to be subjected to an aristocracy anti-national and radically vicious, what chance has it of escaping, or at least of alleviating oppression, if it remains motionless in its ignorance and its misery; and if men do not arise from its own proper bosom, who, superior by their

education, their talent, or their fortune, are capable of taking its cause in hand, and guiding the popular efforts for deliverance?

Whence comes it, that during nearly the whole of the eighteenth century Ireland, sinking under the most oppressive tyranny, presents only a long succession of individual rebellions and partial insurrections, destitute of plan, union, or morality? It is because the people, in the midst of its sufferings, was abandoned to itself, and that, having no friendly superior class to enlighten and lead it, in its wrath it committed outrages which could not but entail new rigours.

The impossibility of a people, however oppressed, raising itself when it has not the support of a superior class, was never shown more clearly than during the insurrection of 1798, when there were as many revolts as there were villages,—soldiers in abundance, but no officers. Everything aristocratic that then existed in Ireland was hostile to this national movement; the people could find no assistance but in a middle class, and such a class did not exist in Ireland. There were some individuals fit to make a part of this class, but not enough to constitute it. We may say, that there was no middle class in Ireland so long as the penal laws were in force, which, striking the Catholics even in civil life, forbade them the possession of estates, injured them in trade, and excluded them from the bar.

There were, it is true, at the same time in Ireland, lawyers, merchants, bankers, and tradesmen; but we should be strangely deceived, were we to believe that

the members of these several professions formed necessarily, and wherever they were met, a middle class. In a country where no privileged aristocracy existed, they would naturally be the upper class, and we should have to search for a middle class in a social state, intermediate between them and the mass of the people. And even in a society whose summit was occupied by an hereditary aristocracy, they might, by closely uniting to it, so identify themselves with that body, that in order to find a middle class, we should still go a step below them. Look at England, where the titled and untitled aristocracy are confounded and blended in one upper class, to which every person that is rich and powerful may aspire: in that country, commerce and banking, on account of their large fortunes,—law and medicine, in consequence of their privileges, connect themselves so intimately with the aristocracy, that they are absorbed in it, and, aided by its malleable nature, form with it but one and the same body. Thus, perhaps, the middle class in England begins only with the farmers, the shopkeepers, the moderate fundholders, and ends with the ten-pound householders. Such was not the middle class in France before 1789. Then, all that was not noble, being inferior in right to the nobility, of which there were manifest proofs, the most eminent in commerce, manufactures, and the liberal professions, belonged by force to the middle class, that is to say, to that which, not being the vulgar herd, is just as little the superior class.

The condition of the middle classes in Ireland is

neither what it was in France before 1789, nor what it is in our days in England. In truth, during all the time that the civil incapacities of the Catholics lasted, the higher industrial and liberal professions, being almost a monopoly of the Protestants, were in Ireland, still more than in England, associated with the aristocracy, towards which they were inevitably attracted by the sympathy of the same creed, the source of their common privileges. It was, then, truly impossible that everything which was Protestant in Ireland, the great lords, the merchants, or the lawyers, should not form a close and single phalanx against the Catholics, who were equally enemies to the Protestant monopoly of wealth, and the Protestant monopoly of power. There might be various ranks amongst the Protestants, but when opposed to the Catholics, that is to say, to the people, they seemed to form one single upper class, between which and the people there was no intermediate.

But when the industrial and liberal professions became equally accessible to Protestants and Catholics, the scene changed, and presented two different aspects, of which we must not lose sight. When the professions were filled by Protestants, these professions continued to furnish their tribute to the Protestant aristocracy, with which they allied themselves the more closely, as they found their enemies, the Catholics, becoming their rivals in industry, when they became free citizens. On the contrary, when occupied by Catholics, they stood aloof from the aristocracy, from which they were separated both by political in-

terest and religious passion. So that from the same social element there issued as it were two streams running in opposite directions, one of which flowed into the aristocracy, with which it mingled and disappeared; whilst the other held its own proper course, and maintained itself between the people from which it issued, and the aristocracy with which it could not be blended. The second is the real source of the middle class in Ireland; it is that which, when there was no middle class in Ireland, contained its germs, and laboured for their development.

It was only in 1776 that agricultural industry was rendered free to Catholics, by the law which permitted them to become proprietors: the bar was not opened to them until 1793, and the end of the commercial monopoly of the Protestants must be dated from the same epoch. Still it would be an error to suppose that in Ireland before this time there existed absolutely no element of a middle class.

I have said that the Catholics were then trammelled in commerce and industry, but commerce and industry were not prohibited. We have already seen, in the account of the penal laws, how the Protestants, being masters of the municipal and commercial corporations, paralysed the industry of Catholics. Still, though they injured, they did not wholly destroy it; they alone occupied the summits of commerce from which they excluded the Catholics, but in the more humble regions the latter still made way. In case of rivalry, the Catholic, loaded with taxes from which the Protestant was exempt, sustained an unequal

struggle; but still he did struggle; he worked with ardour; and this labour, the only refuge of a people to whom civil and political life was forbidden, could not be altogether fruitless. In this was really the future of enslaved Ireland; for in the long run labour creates wealth; wealth, strength; and strength, liberty.

It is manifest, that in a country where Protestant commerce was itself restrained, Catholic industry, loaded with such chains, could not easily produce a middle class. It, however, laboured to do so. And it is a very remarkable fact, that when, about the year 1757, three illustrious patriots, Dr. Curry, O'Connor, and Wyse of Waterford, undertook to regenerate enslaved Ireland,[1] and conceived the first plan of a national association, they made an appeal to all Catholics which found an echo nowhere but in trade. The Catholic clergy, then timid and humbled, remained mute; the small remnant of the Irish Catholic aristocracy was equally silent;[2] the merchants and traders alone responded to the summons. It was thus from trade that the first germ was derived of the great national association which embraces all Ireland: it was thus that trade produced a man too little known, who, for twenty years, alone managed Catholic Ireland; John Keogh, the predecessor of O'Connell, and who would be renowned if he had not been eclipsed by O'Connell, was a tradesman. And when the law opened the bar to Catholics, it was still industry which, raising them above poverty, enabled them to defray the great expenses that precede the exercise of

the privileged profession. Thus, at the worst of the social and political oppression of Ireland, there already issued from the industry of the Catholics, though half enchained, a principle of independence and emancipation. At present this principle is developed in all its freedom. Catholic industry is liberated from every trammel, and the merchant of that religion has not only acquired wealth, but he has also gained all the rights which belong to fortune. In 1793 he obtained the elective franchise; in 1829 admission to parliament. Before these concessions were made, the Catholic merchants of Ireland might have formed a rich class, but they could not form a powerful class. Now, delivered from its fetters, strong in its rights, this class incessantly adds both to its power and its wealth; and it cannot be too watchful of its fortune, for everything unites to promise it in Ireland a glorious destiny.

In England, where the aristocracy is national, the middle class, in whatever rank it may be taken, can only play a secondary part, whether it unites itself to the higher class, and is eclipsed, or separates itself from it, and, in the attempt to balance its power, risks the destruction of its own. In Ireland, on the contrary, where the aristocracy is at open war with the people, the middle class, from the very moment of its existence, is quite naturally the first and only national power.

It is a great advantage for it to be the only superior class accepted by the people without being an aristocracy. It would have a far less favourable position, if there were no aristocracy in Ireland: for then it

might, perhaps, aspire to become an aristocracy itself; and though it might not have such a pretension, it would be open to the accusation. But the existing aristocracy saves it from all peril; it would seem as if that aristocracy had resolved to oppose the perpetual contrast of a hostile power to the national power of the middle class, in order that the people should love the one as much as it detests the other; and in order that the middle class, incessantly beholding what it is that excites the hate of the country, should the better avoid the passions and errors that would deprive it of popular confidence and favour.

A vast and magnificent career is offered to the middle class in Ireland. There is one rock only in its course; it may, in spite of all that keeps it on the side of the people, sometimes incline towards the aristocracy, whether in an endeavour to approximate towards it, or merely to imitate it. The mere possibility of such a deviation from its natural course appears at first sight absolutely irrational; still one should be unacquainted with the English element that exists in Ireland, even amongst the people, and ignorant also of the germs of inequality in that element, not to feel that the middle class in Ireland will have to sustain a struggle in order to remain democratic;—a struggle against its prejudices and its instincts;—a struggle against the habits of the country itself, which is accustomed to see power only in the midst of aristocratic privileges, and which nevertheless, when it sees them there, prepares to combat, and aspires to destroy it.

We must not be astonished if aristocratic inclinations display themselves in the middling properties which are gradually being formed in Ireland;[3] there is not a middling proprietor who, at the sight of the privileges attached to the possession of land, is not tempted to enjoy them himself: he is delighted at possessing in his condition some analogy to a noble lord, his country neighbour, whom he hates as his political and religious enemy, but from whom, to convert his hate into love, he probably waits only for a kind smile, or a complimentary recognition. The old soil of Ireland, like that of England, is impregnated with a sort of feudal contagion from which every possessor finds it difficult to escape. Up to this day, however, the middling Catholic properties have remained on the popular side, but perhaps more from accidental and transitory circumstances than from principle. When, in 1776, the Catholics obtained the right of acquiring real estate, they still continued subject to civil and political incapacities, the last of which, exclusion from parliament, only terminated in 1829; so that whilst they acquired lands, they obtained none of the rights derived from the possession of land; and this contradiction necessarily maintained in full force their hatred against the aristocracy, which derived from its estates benefits from which their estates were excluded. Will they persist in their hostile feelings to the privileged, now that their property gives them, besides all political rights, the chance of being named justices of the peace, being summoned on grand juries, sitting on the bench with the aristocracy in petty and

quarter sessions? It is a question that cannot be solved. Besides, the obstacles that impede the transfer of land in Ireland, which will be discussed elsewhere, prevent real estate, at least for the present, from being a considerable element of the middle class; and this checks their aristocratic tendencies.

The bar has also its aristocratic tendencies, which are not without danger in the future destinies of the middle class. It is a privileged corporation, and has already shown the tastes and passions proper to its origin; and when, in 1793, the bar became free, the first Catholics who became lawyers associated themselves with the Protestant aristocracy. But the spirit of social privilege could not long resist the spirit of political party and religious passion. Barristers at present are the natural combatants in a constitutional and legal strife; and whilst the war lasts, which offers them peaceful and brilliant reputation, it cannot be doubted, that in their intermediate position between the aristocracy and the people they will adhere to the latter.

But of all the sources of a middle class existing in Ireland, that whose principle agrees best with the democratic movement working in the country, and that which is least likely to display aristocratic sympathies, is Catholic commerce; the primary source of a middle class in Ireland; a fruitful source which remained for centuries compressed as it were in the bosom of the earth, under the feet of the Protestant aristocracy, which at present may flow freely, supplied by the labours of several millions of men. A drop from its

waves may be tainted, but the current will always remain pure. Party interests, sectarian feelings, present passions, vindictive remembrance of the past, all conspire to animate Catholic commerce against the aristocracy. Still we are sure, that in its resentments it will never pass certain bounds; the constitutional war which satisfies the others is a necessity to the middle class, for it cannot do without peace. "I begin to see," says Tone in 1793, at a time when he endeavoured to bring the commercial class over to his projects of republican independence,"—I begin to see that merchants are bad instruments of revolution. Commerce is adverse to violent revolutions, and yet it contains an eternal principle of movement; the principle of labour always creating by the side of the principle of indolence, which leaves property to decay: it is the principle of progress without privilege, of the perpetual increase of some without the fixed inequality of others. Here, especially, is the future of Ireland. I say the future, for a middle class in Ireland is as yet little beyond infancy.

It is not that it does not already possess great wealth; on the contrary, its advances have been singularly rapid. In 1778 there were only eighty Catholics in Ireland recognised as landed proprietors;[4] at present, Catholic landed property may be taken as at least one-tenth; and many Catholics who do not possess land have heavy claims on it by mortgage.[5] Forty years ago Catholics were excluded from the bar, where they are now the majority. Catholic commerce flourishing in all Ireland, but especially in the large

towns, such as Belfast, Dublin, Cork, Limerick, and Galway, has already produced immense capitals. One single fact may suffice to show its importance and prosperity, namely, that in 1829 nine-tenths of the funds of the bank of Ireland belonged to Catholic proprietors.[6] Here, assuredly, are prosperous condtiions for a rising middle class. Still it is a strange phenomenon in Ireland, and peculiar to the country, that whilst new fortunes are created, the number of new rich men is not increased in the same proportion. The reason is that after the fortune is created, the rich man departs, and this is explained by the social and political state of Ireland.

The manufacturer, the merchant, and the banker, enriched by their industry in Ireland, would be doubtless tempted to choose that country as their resting place; but, besides the difficulty of obtaining land in Ireland, and finding a secure investment, there are in this country numberless obstacles to quiet possession. The state of Ireland is such that complete security over the land belongs only to the petty occupant, who covers his entire property with his person, and from his cabin extends his hands over all the wealth of which his field is the repository.

And it is not merely the country that is agitated; in the cities and towns, which indeed are less so, parties are so violent, contentions so fierce, the spectacle of the miseries of the people so terrific, that a dwelling in them cannot satisfy the man who, after having laboured, wishes to enjoy the fruits of his labours. It often happens, then, that finding no secure asylum in

in Ireland, those who have acquired wealth, go to seek it in some of the towns of England. We see, then, how it is, that while many make their fortune in Ireland, an equal number does not reside there; and nevertheless, it is the residence, not the fortune made, that must be taken into account. We have not, in fact, to consider whether Catholics gain more or less at the bar or in trade, and purchase estates or rent-charges in Ireland with the fruit of their labours; but whether they live on these estates in Ireland, or spend their income in an Irish town: and if, after having issued from the people by their industry and talents, they take an intermediate place between the aristocracy and the people, and maintain their station.

This evil, which retards the progress of the middle class in Ireland, diminishes every day. It decreases in proportion as large gaps made in the aristocracy open new social positions to the people. Thus, for example, the new poor law will help to detain many members of the middle class in Ireland, for it may be presumed, that from their body the greater number of guardians will be chosen.

It is not merely number that is wanting to the middle class in Ireland; it also wants, what it does not yet possess, knowledge, experience, and education. Issuing suddenly from the most profound obscurity to open day; raised from the general incapacity which sometimes excluded it from the management of its own private affairs, to be suddenly summoned to the direction of public affairs, the middle class of Ireland seems almost dazzled by its own splendour. It scarcely

believes in so magnificent an elevation succeeding so rapidly to so great degradation; and in the intoxication of its sudden fortune, it with difficulty holds a proper position between the aristocracy, its enemy, which it does not always combat with dignity, and the people, which it does not always estimate sufficiently. It has a remnant of the vices belonging to the slave, who always desires to act the tyrant when he becomes free. To confirm its power, of which it still doubts, it might easily be led to extend it to abuse. But the middle class must watch its own conduct with very great care, for on its present wisdom or folly, its future destiny mainly depends.

If we are allowed to regret the obstacles that retard the increase of the elements of which it is composed, we may perhaps also regard it as a piece of good fortune, that this middle class has not been at once put into possession of all its powers. Before it can govern well, it must learn the science of government. It is in this respect that the labours of the national association are still of such immense importance: it is a school of government where instruction is every day afforded to the class that is destined to govern.

This class, which is beyond contradiction the most fertile in producing democracy, is also the most precious. Take away the middle class from Ireland, and you will at once have a country, the best possibly prepared for the reception of an absolute government. Every tyranny would be easy, and, I might almost say, agreeable to the people, provided it declared and

waged war against the aristocracy. From this, indeed, democracy might result, but of the kind which despotism produces. There is in Ireland one chance for absolute power, which the rising middle class may dispute with it, and on the success or failure of this class depends the question, whether Ireland shall have the equality of despotism, or of a free democracy.

## SECT. VI.—*On the State of Parties in Ireland.*

If the true character of parties in England be investigated, it will be found that there does not exist, at least in the present day, a party that can properly be called democratic. Tories, Conservatives, Whigs, are only different shades of the aristocracy, and the same thing may almost be said of the radicals themselves. Not that there do not exist great and deep differences between the parties; they assuredly aim at very different ends, and the controversies that lead them into the lists are real and substantial. But if it be true, that some aim at maintaining aristocratic privileges, and others at modifying them; it may, perhaps, be added that no party wishes to destroy them altogether. There is in the habits, the laws, and the constitution of the English people, an old feudal basis, on which each wishes to erect a different edifice, but which none are anxious to destroy. I will elsewhere attempt to show by what devious paths these aristocratic tendencies may lead England herself to democracy; here I merely take for granted, a charac-

ter common to all English parties, which is nowhere found in Ireland. In the latter country, quite a different spectacle is presented to our view; two parties alone present themselves, between which there is no intermediate. There are no moderate Conservatives, no Whigs; there are only Tories and Radicals, and here the radicals are not aristocratic, for in Ireland the issue is staked between the aristocracy and the people. This extreme character of Irish parties is a fact singularly favourable to democracy.

Such was not always the state of things in Ireland. When the Catholic population in that country counted for nothing, the Protestants, sole masters of society and the government, divided and formed almost as many parties as we now find in England. It is thus that, at the close of the last century, we find these shades of difference very strongly marked amongst the Protestants of Ireland; those, who servilely devoted to the English government, sacrificed to it completely their own independence and that of their country: they were the Tories of the time. Then came the Protestants, who, without taking any account of Catholic Ireland, were anxious to have liberties, rights, and guarantees, for themselves; they were the Whigs of the day: for instance, Lord Charlemont. Finally, there were Protestants who, adopting more elevated principles, and more generous theories, demanded that the benefits of reform should be extended to all without reserve, at the risk of the advantage shared by the Catholic population; these were the radicals of the epoch; and such were Grattan and

Curran. Finally, for some time, at the epoch of the French revolution, there was a fourth party, composed of Protestants and Catholics, which would not be called either Tory, Whig, or Radical, but simply revolutionary, anxious to shake off the English yoke, and establish a republic in Ireland; it was the party which, amongst the Catholics of Dublin, had at its head Theobald Wolfe Tone, and amongst the Protestants of the north, Samuel Neilson of Belfast.

All these elements of party are overthrown in Ireland, and their condition changed. The nation which counted as nothing has now become almost everything; the divisions between the Protestants could not remain the same, and when they separated it was no longer to form a distinct Protestant party, but either to join the popular cause, or organise an opposition against it. From that moment it was no longer different systems and opinions that were opposed to each other, but two implacable enemies which had sown each other's ruin, between which compromise was no longer possible, and which, even when they did not fight, retained their arms in their hands. Hence the necessity imposed upon every person in Ireland of ranging himself under one of the two banners that is presented to his view; hence the two parties which alone at the present day show themselves in the country.

The first is the old Anglican party, which takes for its motto the maintenance of the Protestant church, and for its rallying cry hatred of popery; its great principle is the intimate union of church and state,

that is to say, of the Anglican worship and the English aristocracy. Whilst everything around this party advances and changes, it remains motionless, and would maintain, amidst the ruins of the universe, that a political society could not exist unless it was exclusively Protestant.

This party cannot conceive a Protestant society unless with a Protestant government, a Protestant king, a Protestant parliament, Protestant judges and functionaries, Protestant citizens and soldiers.[1] Whatever in the country is not Protestant is in its eyes as if it never existed, and had only a fictitious life. This party considers everything that has been done contrary to its exclusive principle an evil. It believes that the constitution was violated when any single one of the laws enacted against the Catholics was repealed. These laws, in the opinion of the party, did not oppress the Catholics; it only depended on themselves to become free under the protection of the laws; for this purpose, it was only necessary that they should turn Protestants; and of course it was necessary to demand this condition, since Protestantism was the law of the state, the law of the country, the law of the land. This party is still at 1688.

According to this party, the constitution was violated when Scotland was permitted to have a Presbyterian church; and a sort of sacrilege was committed when the English parliament voted funds for a seminary destined to educate Catholic priests; the constitution was also violated when the elective franchise was conceded to the Irish Catholics, and again when

they were allowed to sit in parliament; in the eyes of the party these concessions are as if they never were granted; and he who believes that they cannot be resumed deplores them. Every time that similar concessions are made to the Catholics, the Tory party sees, or pretends to see, a rabid monster about to escape from the cage in which it is chained, to pounce upon the Protestants, and swallow them alive. This monster is popery.[2]

This party has a singular veneration for the name of William III., Prince of Orange, the conqueror at the Boyne, and the last founder of the Anglican church in Ireland; it displays his portraits and emblems, toasts at public meetings his "pious, glorious, and immortal memory," and endeavours to maintain in all its vigour the religious passions on which the fortune of that prince was raised. It is hence called the Orange party.[3]

This party, which for more than a century trampled the Catholic people under foot, has still more contempt than hatred for this people; when it speaks of "good society," it always means a society of Protestants; in its mouth everything that is Protestant is called *respectable*, in opposition to everything Catholic.

This party believes that all the evils of the country have arisen from the weakness of government, which did not, when it had the opportunity, sufficiently repress rebels.[4] After having shown that on the suppression of the insurrection of 1798, sixty-six persons accused of rebellion were executed in Wexford alone,

the historian, Sir Richard Musgrave, who deemed this too lenient, says, "Hence we may judge of the lenity of the government."[5] .... Here is the true orangeman. Under the ardent religious or political passions of the Orange or Tory party, some interested feelings may be found lurking,—amongst others a wish to preserve the enormous privileges of an aristocracy which performs no function of government, and the splendid revenues of a church that has nothing to do.

The Radical party is composed of all that do not belong to the Tory party; as it is supported on the foundation of the Catholic population entirely devoted to it, we find it sometimes called the Catholic or national party; it has for its root old Ireland, Celtic and free; and for its head, young Ireland enfranchised; for its soul, the Catholic religion; for its banner, liberty. Its grievances and its hatreds rest on six hundred years of oppression; its hopes on half a century of victories; the sanctity of its cause on a series of oppression surpassing all belief.

Although profoundly Catholic, many Protestants belong to this party, whilst there is not a single Catholic in the Protestant Tory party.[6]

Thus in Ireland the Catholic party is the liberal party; and the reason is plain: the Catholics, of whom it is in a great measure composed, having been long oppressed, have naturally demanded reforms, which the Tories, for whose profit the tyranny was instituted, resisted with all their might. Those who reject such reforms under the pretext that they are inconsistent with the constitution, take, in opposition

to the liberal party, the name of the constitutional party.

It is the National, Catholic, Liberal or Radical party which, during fifty years in Ireland, was compelled to hide its head, but now raises it, supported by seven millions of men.[7] It is this party, which is more than a party, for it is the nation itself, which in 1792, raising its first cry, shouted that in order to be powerful it was only necessary for it to come into existence, and then obtained the first political emancipation of the Catholics. It is this party which, after having received a happy impulse from the French revolution, was afterwards crushed by it; it was accused of sympathies for a republic, for the outrages as well as the principles of liberty: it was aided by '89, and it was killed by '93.

It is this party over whose dead body the union of 1800 passed, which, after being annihilated for twenty years, revived in the association formed by O'Connell, took, in 1825, Catholic emancipation for its rallying cry; in 1831, abolition of tithes; in 1833, repeal of the union; and in 1838, reform of the church and of the municipal corporations.

When I say that there are only two parties in Ireland, I am far from maintaining that all who serve under the same banner think alike. There are Protestants in the Tory party who are far from sharing all its passions and principles. Survey that entire portion of the Presbyterians, which I have called orthodox, and who are for the most part firm supporters of the Orange or Tory party; it is not sympathy

which unites them to that party, for they detest from the bottom of their hearts the Anglican church, which serves it for a base. But to make war on the Catholics, whom they hate still more, they are obliged to unite with the main body of the army, which is composed of Anglican Tories. Other Protestants contend for radical reform; but yet they proceed on principles in politics and religion very different from those of the Catholics with whom they are allied; thus the Presbyterian dissidents, or Unitarians, on many points far removed from the Catholic party, are nevertheless its valuable auxiliaries.

Shades of difference are particularly found amongst those Protestants who, though belonging to the Anglican church, separate themselves from the Orange and Anglican party to support the Catholic or national party; some, in embracing the liberal cause, only obey a deep sense of conscience and equity; others do the same from calculation: when the Anglican party was strong they supported it; they abandon it when it is weak, and go over to the Catholic party to which the strength has passed; the former act from prudence, the latter from fear. When the popular cause is ready to triumph, and its success becomes every day more probable, many, who before condemned this cause as absurd and seditious, begin to suspect its good sense and equity; they see on the side of the people approaching triumphs in which it will be pleasant to take a share, and in the opposite camp defeats and dangers which it is wise to avoid.

But whatever may be the operating motive, and

whatever the differences which separate the main armies from their auxiliaries,—whatever repugnance those may feel to an intimate union whom political motives draw together, whilst they are divided by moral and religious causes,—so long as they are enrolled under the same banner,—so long as the Presbyterian is united to the Anglican, or the Anglican to the Catholics,—there is a close union, and a necessity of fighting together; for only two armies exist in Ireland, and it is absolutely necessary to belong to one or the other. In short, we may say, that nowhere are parties more rigidly marked, and yet that in no country is there a greater variety of passions, sentiments, ideas, and interests.

It would likewise be an error to suppose, because there are only two parties, that whoever has joined one is necessarily chained to it: there exists certainly in each an immovable and unchangeable main body; in the Tory party, it is the Anglican church and aristocracy; in the Radical party, it is the whole Catholic population. The Protestant middle class and the Presbyterians form what may be called the variable and fluctuating population, which furnishes turn-about materials to the Radicals and to the Tories. A Protestant, who in 1825 ardently demanded the emancipation of the Catholics, now votes against them at the elections. Another, who joined them to abolish church-rates and tithes, becomes their adversary when, instead of attacking the abuses of the Protestant church, they assail the principle itself. Far from being eternal, these alliances in Ireland are sin-

gularly frail. In the first movement of enthusiasm, acting under a generous impulse, they join, make a treaty of perpetual amity, and believe sincerely in the strength of this friendly alliance. But the union is more at the surface than at the bottom. Protestants and Catholics embraced when they won the great victory in 1829, due to their common efforts; the effusion of feeling was real, the harmony touching; nevertheless, the germs of division existed in the bottom of their hearts. The Protestant said in his heart, "Here is what will content the Catholics;" the Catholic, on the other hand, whispered to himself, "Here is a great conquest, by the aid of which I will obtain others." And on the following day the two friends were opposed as adversaries face to face. But the members who compose this variable element of Irish parties cannot quit one camp without passing immediately into the other; and often in the conflict of grave motives, which nearly balance each other, the slightest circumstance sends the Radical to-day over to the Tories, and will drive him back the next to restore him to the Radicals.

It would be difficult to tell how long this state of things will last. However, it appears to me, that if a third party should be formed in Ireland, it will not be amongst the Protestant aristocracy that it will have its birth, but rather amongst the Catholic population, which, confident in its strength, and prompt to forget, will be disposed to divide. But the course hitherto adopted by the leaders of the popular party has singularly tended to the maintenance of party union.

The system of constitutional agitation nearly satisfies both those who, fond of peaceful discussion, reject the use of sanguinary violence as a means of success, and those who, believing the arms of logic insufficient, think that the aid of physical force should not be wholly neglected. Now this system, which very ingeniously combines the two powers of law and force, has hitherto succeeded in preventing amongst the people the formation either of a moderate Whig party or a revolutionary party.

Still it is probable that if, during a long course of years, England should refuse the reforms demanded by the Radical party existing in that country, there would be formed beneath that Radical party one still more radical, and which could not be so without becoming revolutionary; and, on the other hand, if great concessions were made to Ireland, her worst wounds would be healed, and a Whig party might be formed intermediate between the present Radicals and Tories.

Whatever may be the cause hereafter, the only party in which divisions could arise is now united and compact; and in Ireland a choice must necessarily be made between it and its antagonist.

Such are the principal features of the two parties, which in our day divide Ireland.

I do not know if these two parties were ever more opposed to each other than they are at present; but it would be difficult at any time to have exhibited greater hatred. Perhaps this may be a result of the greater liberty which they enjoy, and which permits

them to express weaker enmity with greater energy; perhaps they are more vehement, without being more hostile. Within the last twenty years considerable changes have been wrought in the social and political condition of Ireland; the themes of triumph for one party, and of humiliation for the other: the recent recollection of these excites insolent joy with the former, and bitter regret with the latter. What cannot be denied is, that the spirit of party mingles with everything in Ireland. It poisons the social relations. The Irish Tories and Radicals not only form two parties, but two very distinct classes, which have no point of contact; far different from English parties, whose opposite leaders, after a violent struggle in parliament, may be met the same day in the same social circle, which they enter, after having laid aside every remembrance of quarrel and resentment. In Ireland, the separation of the two parties is, in some degree, physical; in every town there are the Protestant hotel, and the Catholic hotel: meetings, balls, dinners, are similarly distinguished; the same distinction extends even to roads and rivers: it is not very long since an Irish nobleman claimed the intervention of government to prevent the erection of a Popish bridge.[8]

But the spirit of party does not stop there in Ireland; and who would believe it? Party enters so deeply into the soul, that in a christian country it has corrupted charity at its very source. "What use is there," exclaims a Protestant Tory, "in attending to the poor and their miseries? Are there not poor in

all countries? Has not Ireland always overflowed with them?" .... "Accursed be the landlords of Ireland!" exclaims the Irish Radical; "they see without pity the misery that covers their estates." The poor, whose charity is to love the rich, owe them nothing but hatred.

But it is particularly in the north of Ireland that these hateful passions show themselves, and rage in all their violence; there the parties are not different, but they are in a different position. In the south, where, taking the average, there are about twenty Catholics to one Protestant; the Tory party is numerically too weak to measure itself against its adversary; there a single combat would be fatal to it; and it never acts on the offensive; when attacked by open force, instead of defending itself with arms, it calls to its aid the government and the law, the police and the army.

In the north, on the contrary, as the two parties are nearly equal, each may hope for success in a violent contest; and hence the two parties seem always ready to enter the lists, and might be supposed constantly on the eve of a civil war. The outrages, so common in the south, the attempts of the Whiteboys, and their fearful confederations, belong far less to the spirit of party, than to the vices of social organisation. On the contrary, it is the spirit of party that predominates in the north.

Wolf Tone relates in his Memoirs, that, having visited the county of Derry in 1792, with one of his friends, on a political mission, the Protestant inn-

keepers at Rathfriland, knowing that they were Catholics, refused to supply them with breakfast for their money.

In the month of July, 1837, I traversed the province of Ulster; it is at this season that the Orange party is accustomed to celebrate the glorious memory of the Boyne and William III. My quality of stranger did not preserve me from the insults to which, at such a juncture, every Catholic is subject; and more than once I was assailed with the popular cry of *No Popery*. A sad event was then the topic of conversation. On the 28th of June, 1837, a holiday amongst the Catholics of Ireland, some Catholic women and children were assembled round a bonfire in the county of Monaghan, where a sportive gaiety was mingled with the sentiments of piety. Suddenly three musket shots were heard, and four children fell lifeless to the earth. The murderers remained unknown, but every one said that the hatred of the Orangemen for Papists had produced the crime, and nobody doubted it.

The Orange party, of which Ulster is the focus, manifests every day a greater desire to use violence than it displayed before. Formerly, the threats of physical force came rather from the Catholic and Radical party, from the popular masses, to which leaders and chiefs were alone wanting for an insurrection. For a long time the Irish nation believed that its deliverance and regeneration could only be obtained by a political revolution, which, bestowing on the government the disposal of rights and properties, would re-

store power and estates to the original possessors, or their heirs. These traditions, formerly familiar to the national party, were first weakened by long and useless efforts, and afterwards the success obtained by exertion and free institutions have completely dissipated the dreams of sudden and violent prosperity. But it seems that, at the moment the principle of force was abandoned by the Catholic party, it was adopted by the Orangemen. Nothing is more common than to hear members of that party express their ardent desire for actual civil war. "No union," they say, "is possible between Papists and Protestants: it is a mere chimera to wish that they should dwell in the same land; one must absolutely expel the other, as truth drives away falsehood; it is a quarrel of life or death. Let a decisive engagement, let a war of extermination, settle the debate." This language is not openly avowed by the Tory party, but many Tories use it. In fact, they think that, eventually, matters must come to this issue, and that it is better to have the fight at once; they feel power slipping from their hands every day, and they deem it wiser to commence the battle while they are still strong.

It would seem that there must naturally exist some mediator between the two parties, able, if not to bring them together, at least of calming their mutual animosity: this mediator is the government. In every country the government is the natural moderator of parties. To interpose between them, to hold the balance even, to temper one by the other, to force a concession from the one, an abandonment of a demand

from the other, to protect all, to succumb to none such in Ireland is the path pointed out to the English government; an admirable task, but very difficult, not to say impossible, to be executed. There are in the two parties ancient spites, implacable passions, exclusive interests, which repulse every intervention of a mediator; and conciliation is impossible between parties so widely separated. In fact, there is no alternative for the English government but to side with one or the other; and such is the violence of those between whom it must choose, that the moment it chooses one party, it must abandon itself to the party altogether, follow instead of direct it; and thus the government is soon led by the passions which it ought to guide.

The English government in Ireland never takes the position it ought to take, until the two parties, arms in hand, are ready to cut each others throats, when it places between them its police and its soldiers. The government is allowed to suppose that without it the two parties would commence civil war; and this is sufficient to sweeten the task, otherwise so difficult, which it has to execute in this country; but with this exception, it exercises in truth no individual or spontaneous action over the parties, from which it receives impulse, instead of taking, as it ought, the initiative.

If it adopts the Tory party, it must necessarily take up all its religious prejudices, all its political resentments and hatreds; and acting thus, it must increase the national sentiment which rejects this

detested party. Should it declare for the liberal or Catholic party, it does not less receive the yoke; and then, instead of restraining the popular torrent, it serves only to precipitate its course.

It is thus that the state of parties in Ireland is an additional and fruitful source of democracy.

# THIRD PART.

## CHAPTER I.

### THE THREE PRINCIPAL REMEDIES THAT HAVE BEEN PROPOSED FOR IRISH EVILS.

We have seen the evils that Ireland endures; we have seen that all these evils proceed from a primary and continued cause; finally, we have seen the kind of resistance that the excess of its miseries has produced amongst the people. The situation of Ireland may be thus summarily described—PROFOUND INDIGENCE AMONGST THE PEOPLE, PERMANENT ANARCHY IN THE STATE.

Now that all the social and political sufferings are known, how are they to be cured? How are we to alleviate the cruel sufferings of a starving people? How came the formidable revolts of irritated anguish? How give sustenance to the people, and peace to the country?

When we see millions of paupers in a population, the first sentiment felt is that of deep pity; and before engaging in reforms, which belong to the political organisation of society, is not the mind at once disposed to inquire by what means it can alleviate the

physical condition of so many necessitous persons? We ask of ourselves, if, independent of all forms of government, the poor people of Ireland may not at once be raised from its profound indigence by some procedure, sudden, extraordinary, extreme, like the misery it is designed to cure? The Irish people are dying of hunger.... They must be aided. Is it by laws or constitutional reforms? No; there is urgent need; bread, not theories, is wanted. Employment and means of working are wanted. Miserable Ireland is surcharged with population; it is necessary to lighten the load that crushes her; and such aid must be given to Ireland immediately. And this misery, which calls so loudly for immediate assistance, is it not increasing every day? Each day this population of paupers becomes more numerous, and in proportion as its increasing misery excites more pity, the menaces of its despair inspires more terror. It is, in fact, a phenomenon worthy of meditation, that the population of Ireland, although so miserable, multiplies more rapidly than that of England and Scotland, which are so prosperous; and what is more remarkable is, that in Ireland itself the population is multiplied in direct proportion to its misery. It is in Connaught that famine rages most severely, and it is there that the population multiplies most rapidly.[1] Why, then, should we not attempt at once to arrest this frightful misery, the progress of which reveals so much of suffering, and so much of danger?

Three systems are offered which promise to lead to the end that we wish to attain. I. To procure em-

ployment for the unoccupied paupers. II. Diminishing the population by furnishing the indigent with the means of emigrating. III. Supporting at the public expense those who are neither employed in Ireland, nor removed to another country. In other words, three means are offered for the salvation of Ireland,—industrial employment, emigration, and poor laws. Let us examine these three systems separately. They have been, and are now, amongst the best statemen, objects of study and labour, which demand our serious attention.

## Sect. I.—*Increase of Industrial Employment.*

Of the three means proposed, the first would undoubtedly be the best, if it were practicable; for assuredly it is better to draw an idle population to useful labour than to feed it with alms, or send it into exile.

The statement, that there are four millions of persons unemployed in Ireland is doubtless an exaggeration. Official documents prove that, out of 7,763,000 inhabitants, there are 4,863,000 engaged in agriculture, and 1,419,000 employed in trade or manufactures; whence it would follow that about one million were destitute of all employment.[1] But in Ireland the greatest number of paupers consists not of those who have no work but of those who have not regular work. Half of the Irish farmers are paupers for a part of the year; and if account were taken only of the agricultural labourers and manufacturing opera-

tives who have employment all the year round, the amount of such labourers would be next to nothing.[2] We may then, without risk of error, affirm that, out of the eight millions in Ireland, half have either no employment, or employment insufficient for acquiring the means of subsistence.[3]

The same statistical documents, which show that in Ireland nearly five millions of individuals are employed on the land, show that in England and Scotland, out of a population of 16,205,000, not more than five millions are engaged in agriculture; that is to say, nearly the same number that is so employed in Ireland; nevertheless, England and Scotland have an extent of 54,000,000 of acres, whilst Ireland has only 19,000,000. So that in Ireland the land absorbs two-thirds of the population, whilst in the other two countries it does not engage quite one third; and that Ireland employs as many labourers to cultivate her soil as England and Scotland, which are double her size. Finally, it appears certain that by the Irish system of tillage the ground produces one half less than it does under the management of an English or Scotch farmer; whence it follows that three Irish agricultural labourers do rather less work than an Englishman or Scotchman.[4] Even supposing that the number of English and Scotch labourers is too small, that of the Irish agriculturists is clearly excessive. And the defective cultivation of the ground depends precisely on their quantity.

The employment in tillage of more hands than are necessary, and who injure each other from the mere

effect of their numbers, is an absolute evil in an economic point of view; but this evil may be a relative good in politics. Thus, if it were true that every one in Ireland not engaged in the cultivation of land is absolutely without employment, and that every unoccupied individual is an enemy of the public peace, we should be compelled to acknowledge that, even for the general advantage, it would be better that the land were covered with the greater number of cultivators, even though the produce were less. Thus, whilst the principles of political economy would advise the ejection from the land of half of those who occupy it, the political state of the country would require that the number of cultivators should be still further increased.

What, then, is to be done? Must we, by tearing away a portion of those who derive from it some means of subsistence, increase the number of Irishmen who have neither resource nor employment? Or must we increase the sum of misery that crushes the country, by breaking up the portions of the present occupants, and distributing the fragments to those who have none?

Assuredly, if there is any country to which the establishment of manufactures would be a blessing, Ireland is that country. Employment to its half-occupied or idle hands would be to Ireland not only an element of happiness, but a means of safety. There is in Ireland a productive force of several millions of hands which is inert or ill-directed. It is an instrument which manufacturing industry would set at work

where it is now idle, and render fruitful where it is barren.

All causes unite to render the development of industry in Ireland desirable: if the physical existence of the lower classes is interested in it, so also is the future of the middle classes, whom we have seen invited to so high a destiny; industry alone can feed the one, and enrich the other.

There are countries where the progress of manufacturing industry is not viewed without a kind of disquietude and terror; they are those where the peasants seem to desert tillage in multitudes for the factories, and where the large manufacturers, by their number and system, seem to contain germs of corruption for the people, and danger for the state. But what reason is there to fear that the land would be abandoned in a country where the people knows and loves nothing but it? What we have to dread in Ireland is not the excess that would drive too large a portion of the population from the country into the manufacturing towns, but the very contrary extreme. We should fear that the people chained to the soil should not be sufficiently detached from it to support manufacturers. Even supposing that a factory life exercises a pernicious influence on the physical and moral conditions of the operatives; supposing that the factory corrupts women and children, and attacks the habits of domestic life, and the future prospects of society;—were it true that the aggregation of large masses of operatives, in particular parts of the country, becomes too considerable a power in the state,

and too dangerous an instrument in the hands of parties;—were it no less firmly established that these great operative masses which manufacturers employ, are subject, from their oscillations, to fall suddenly and without transition, from labour into idleness—that is to say, from comfort to destitution;[5] these evils, admitting them in their fullest extent, would be a thousand times less than those which exist in Ireland; where idleness corrupts far more than the labour in factories,—where misery depraves all those whom idleness does not corrupt, and where millions of starving paupers are a more formidable cause of disorder and anarchy, than a like number of individuals could be in any case, who found in their labour numerous means of existence. Whence, then, comes it, that Ireland so much required, and is at the same time so destitute of, manufacturing industry?[6]

It is not because the protection of government is wanting to industry in Ireland, but that protection is almost barren. The system of prizes to encourage certain fabrics has been tried, some efforts of production followed, which ceased so soon as the prizes were withdrawn. In order to open a free scope for Irish industry, government is anxious to open immense lines of communication by canals and railways; assuredly such means of transport are admirable aids to industry, but they must first find the industry existing; they might aid its birth, but they could not create it. In 1780, Ireland had fine roads. Arthur Young, whose testimony has great weight, declares that at that period they were far superior to the roads of

England. Ireland was then not the less destitute of commerce and manufactures; whilst England had already entered on her era of commercial wealth and industrial prosperity.

In its desire to promote Irish industry and trade, government has proposed to execute itself the great lines of communication which it deems proper to be made. But this is a perilous means. Is it fit that government should be a speculator in public works? Can private industry securely advance in a country where it may at every step find a rival so powerful as the state? [6]

The government of Ireland might perhaps see in this system of works executed by the state, the advantages of at once giving employment to those not employed by private industry; but such work would only afford partial and transitory relief. And it would be so especially in every British country, where the intervention of government in public works is considered, and not perhaps without reason, a fraud on private enterprise. Now this accidental employment of idle hands would be an evil rather than a good, if the labourer, after his temporary engagement with the government, found afterwards no employment in the factories of private speculators. It is a great misfortune for a country to believe that the protection of government is necessary to the prosperity of its industry. Industry and industrial employments are not created by imperial decrees or acts of parliament; governments have been led to believe that they can

create them, by the facility with which they can destroy them, or prevent their birth.

There were formerly flourishing manufactures in Ireland ;[8] the English government, then, to effect this purpose, had only to fetter them, for liberty is the vital air to industry: it loaded with trammels half the operatives of Ireland,[9] and interdicted its ports and those of the entire world to the products of Irish labour.[10]

England's oppression of Ireland is nowhere shown so clearly as in its commercial policy. England wished to sell everything to Ireland, and purchase nothing, which was just as absurd as it was unjust: for Ireland could not traffic with England, and how could those buy which did not sell? This commercial selfishness of England was sometimes pushed to downright insanity. In the reign of Charles II., England having resolved to extend its exclusion of the products of Irish industry, a bill passed the Commons, by which the importation of Irish cattle was declared *a nuisance;* in the Lords some objection was made to the word *nuisance*, and one member proposed that it should be *a felony;* the chancellor, with more wit and as much reason, said that it might as well be called *adultery.*[11]

The unjust trammels which fettered Irish industry are now broken: all Irish operatives are free; Ireland may send her produce to every part of the world; and the ports of England are open to her. The commercial liberty which unites Ireland to England is not merely that which is established between nation and nation, but that which naturally exists between different portions of the same nation, between two territo-

ries subject to the same empire; Ireland and England are in the same commercial relation to each other as any two English cities; Dublin trades with Liverpool, just as Liverpool does with London.

But the industrial employment which despotism so easily destroys, does not so easily revive with liberty; for though it cannot exist without freedom, yet freedom is not its creator; far different conditions are required both for its birth and development.

The commercial liberty of which the conquest was begun in 1782, but not completed until 1820, has hitherto produced only one salutary effect in Ireland. It has opened an immense market to its agricultural produce, and secured a kind of privilege for its corn in the English ports from which the grain of other countries is excluded. But it has conferred no advantages on Irish manufacture; Ireland still continues to use the products of English industry.

There are some who believe it impossible for Ireland to establish manufactures whilst England is allowed to import the produce of hers; those who are of this opinion propose, that in order to protect the rising manufactures of Ireland, a duty should be imposed on the import of English goods. But then, in retaliation, the agricultural produce of Ireland would be similarly taxed in England. So that she possesses and would compromise a certain advantage for a future and very dubious good. Besides, is it true that the competition of English industry is the principal obstacle to the growth of manufactures in Ireland?

Certainly not: the greatest obstacle is elsewhere; it arises less from England than from Ireland herself.

Without doubt, the English operative is on the whole superior to the Irish operative: he is more skilful and steady; he works longer and better; but the immense use made of Irish operatives in England, proves that the objection is not caused by themselves. Manchester and Liverpool employ myriads of Irishmen in their factories.[12] Assuredly, when we see the two greatest industrial and commercial cities of Britain, I may say of the whole world, prosper by the labour of Irish operatives, it cannot be said that the defective labour in Ireland depends on the very nature of the workman.

It must be added, that if the labour of the Irishman is inferior to that of the Englishman, the defect has a compensating advantage, which is, that it is cheaper. A journeyman's wages are very low in Ireland, because there is little work and an immense competition of workmen: should an Irishman in a factory do only half the work of an Englishman, it will be still more profitable to employ him, for the Englishman gets more than double his wages.[13]

It seems, then, that Ireland is in the most prosperous condition for the establishment of manufactures. But it is not sufficient that industry should be free; it is not sufficient to have instruments of execution; the prime mover is still wanting, that is to say, capital. Now in Ireland there is absolutely no capital.[14] And why? Because this country has been long subject to

the persecutions of an arbitrary government, and capitals only show themselves under the auspices of justice and guarantees; because this country possessing in the present day considerable liberties, whilst at the same time it remains subject to institutions radically vicious, is kept by the inevitable struggle in a constant state of agitation. Capital is wanting to develope industry in Ireland, but capital flies from agitation; and as capital withdraws, misery is augmented. This increase of misery multiplies the chances of trouble and disorder, and renders capital still more scarce. Once involved in this vicious circle, escape is scarcely possible.

Capital is not only wanting to manufacturing industry in Ireland, we find a similar deficiency in agricultural industry. Because there are in Ireland nearly five millions occupied with the ground, it is supposed that there is not a supply of land for the population, and that the insufficiency of the soil is the cause of all the evils. But this opinion must yield to a physical fact. Out of nineteen millions of acres, forming the surface of Ireland, there are five millions of land on which the industry of man has never been tried, and which, nevertheless, might be profitably tilled or employed in pasturage.[15] And why do these lands, which seem to invite labour, remain naked and deserted? Because, in order that they should be fertilised, advances of capital are required, which the poor man cannot make, and the rich will not. And why will not the rich man invest capital in the culture of the Irish soil, without which that culture cannot increase?

Because the state of the country prevents him. It is not land, then, which is wanting to the population in Ireland; it is capital that is required for agricultural labour as well as manufacturing industry.

This want of capital is not the only impediment to the improvement of the Irish workman. I have already said, that the Irish workman is not unfitted by nature for manufacturing industry, and the example of all the Irishmen profitably employed in England and Scotland attests the fact. But we must confess that so long as the Irishman remains in Ireland, he has certain grievous faults which belong not to his nature but to the country, and which render him a bad servant.

Accustomed to endure every sort of oppression in Ireland, he has, when employed, one fixed idea, which is, that his employer will either give him no wages, or that he will pay him a less sum than is justly his due. Thus, what happens when a manufacture is established in Ireland? Scarcely are the operatives, who at first consented to work for moderate wages, masters of the field, when they combine to obtain higher wages, and applying the Whiteboy principle to manufactures, they arbitrarily fix the price of a day's work; they enact terrible penalties against the master who should pay, and the journeyman who should consent to receive, less wages; and this barbarous code does not contain idle menaces; punishment follows close on the offence; and not long since, Dublin was the theatre of horrid murders committed on poor operatives, whose only crime was that they worked for a

lower price than that fixed by the "Union of Trades;" unfortunate beings, who were murdered because they were satisfied with moderate wages, and who must have starved for want of work, if they asked higher! And what is the infallible result of these outrages? If the manufacturer yields, he is ruined; if he resists, the operatives refuse to work. In either case industrial enterprise is destroyed, and the operative who complains, and perhaps not without reason, that he receives too little wages for his work, is deprived both of work and wages.[16]

Here and there in England we see examples of such combinations, called sticks and strikes, but they have always been partial and transitory; they have frequently ruined one branch of industry, but never every branch of industry. In the place of the continual dread that an Irishman has of never being paid for his work, the Englishman has in general great confidence in his employers, because he is accustomed to find them careful of his rights and faithful to their engagements. The English operative, besides, generally possesses sufficient knowledge to comprehend that a temporary increase of wages may be pernicious to himself, if that increase destroys the branch of industry on which his wages depend.

This explains why the Irishmen are good workmen in English factories. When they leave Ireland, they abandon these savage traditions, and whilst they bring their physical and intellectual faculties to England, they acquire there the morality in which they were deficient, and they acquire it the more readily, when

they learn that in England the rights of the journeyman are as sacred as those of the master.

The same reason explains why it is that manufacturing industry, languishing or destroyed in almost the entire country, is rather prosperous in the north of the island, where the higher and the working classes are not, as in the south, in a state of mutual suspicion; where there is war between political and religious parties, but not between the rich and the poor, the master and the workman.

Thus, on one side the agitated state of Ireland prevents the introduction of capital, and when capital is introduced by persons sufficiently bold to brave this agitation, these brutal and violent passions, which the working class seem almost to breathe in the atmosphere that surrounds them, raise an almost insurmountable obstacle to the success of their enterprise.

Without these two causes which have been just explained, capital, instead of flying from Ireland, would resort to it, and we shall soon see the source from which it would flow.

England is overflowing with capital; she sends her money over the entire world; she invests it on her continent, in America, in Asia; she speculates on land in the United States, on mines in Mexico; she establishes steam-boats in India. Why then, instead of sending her capital eight or ten thousand miles, should she not invest it in a country under her hand, where there is such a fund of labour, only requiring to be set to work? "England," say some, "wishes to keep to herself the monopoly of industry." I should

be glad if her policy tended to this object—but what matters it, whether or no? Capital has no national spirit; wherever there is most profit and security, it makes its home. Besides, Ireland is English; it forms a part of the British empire. We should assign very extravagant national passions to English capitalists, if Belfast and Dublin differed in their eyes from Manchester and Glasgow. Let us state the matter fairly: the obstacle clearly arises from Ireland being the most miserable and agitated country in the whole world; hence an Englishman will invest his capital anywhere rather than in Ireland, and precisely because the country is directly before his eyes, he sees more clearly the danger to which his capital would be exposed if he sent it thither.

What must we conclude from the preceding statements? In the first place, so long as the causes exist which oppose the spontaneous development of Irish industry, it is not from manufactures that we must ask work for those who have it not, and a remedy for the evils of which the idleness of the people is the real or supposed cause: and in the second place, that to render the development of Irish industry possible, it is necessary to begin by removing the causes by which it is now paralysed. These causes are notorious; they are the anarchy of the country, and the spirit that animates the working classes.

But whose business is it to combat these obstacles, so ruinous to Irish industry? The establishment of manufactures is, doubtless, no business of the government; but assuredly its natural task is to prevent

or dissipate the political causes which prevent the rise and growth of manufactures.

Now, by what means can the government restore peace to the country, and bestow upon the people the dispositions which are necessary to the establishment of industrial employment in Ireland? This is a question of a different nature from that which we are discussing, and which goes beyond the scope of the present chapter. I have limited myself to showing, that manufacturing industry, under present circumstances, cannot be a means of safety for Ireland, since it must encounter immense obstacles in the country itself. These obstacles arise from the inherent vice of its institutions, so that to inquire the means of developing industry in Ireland, leads us to search what sort of reforms ought to be made in the institutions of the country. The question is stated, but the arrangement of the work requires that the discussion should be placed elsewhere.

## Sect. II.—*Emigration.*

If it is impossible to find employment in Ireland for all those who are wholly or partly unoccupied, we must, say some, diminish the number of labourers, and what better means is there of attaining this end than emigration?

Of all the systems which during the last twenty years have been proposed for the safety of Ireland, there is not perhaps one which has met more favour in England than emigration conducted on a large scale.

It is a violent remedy, it is true, but it is one which rests on a fact apparently simple, and suited to catch the imagination. There are some millions of people whose situation in Ireland is truly deplorable; let them be transported to another country, less crowded with inhabitants; they will there find a happy lot, and those who remain, delivered from a superabundant population, will be comfortable and prosperous. This theory is supported by the authority of economists; it has several times received the sanction of parliament itself, and many would believe the wounds of Ireland incurable if emigration could not heal them.

Are not the political doctrines by which nations are governed subject to strange variations? We are still close to a period when the theories of statesmen and the science of government had in view no object more constant or more dear than the increase of population.[1] Severe on celibacy, the laws favoured early marriages, and public rewards were decreed to prolific mothers,[2] and the emigration of children from their country was forbidden as a public curse. Now, amongst one of the most civilised nations of the earth, an opinion is established that the increase of population is the greatest danger with which a nation can be menaced; we are taught that to avert this peril, it is necessary not only to check the tendency to increase, but also to diminish the existing number: and emigration is not only permitted, but solemnly encouraged as a means of safety, both for those who emigrate, and for the country relieved from the surplus population.

It was down to our days a doctrine universally con-

secrated, that a dense population is the source of strength and national wealth to a country, and that though it may injure it from being badly directed, yet it is always capable of being converted into an instrument of power and prosperity; a very different theory from that which now prevails, when the population seems excessive, and one-half must be banished to ensure the prosperity of the other.

What must Ireland think of her governors? The time is not very distant when her inhabitants were rigorously prohibited from emigrating by the very English government which now offers every encouragement to emigration.[3]

Without dwelling further on the contradictions between these different systems, and without examining to what extent the successive employment of each was justified by a difference of circumstances, let us inquire if emigration could at this moment be of any benefit to Ireland.

And in the first place, is it true, that if the population of Ireland was diminished by a third, or even by a half, the miseries of the country would cease? This is a first point which I may be permitted to doubt. The population of Ireland is, in truth, reduced to miserable expedients for subsistence. It imposes on itself the most cruel privations, which do not save it every year from enduring a famine more or less severe. It is fed on the worst of food, in spite of which it is exposed to periodical starvation. It has adopted the system best adapted to sustain the greatest number of inhabitants on the smallest possible territory. For it

is a well-established economic truth, that the same extent of land which planted with potatoes would support twenty persons, would not grow corn sufficient for more than four or five, and would, if employed as pasturage for cattle, not feed more than one individual. Ireland has absolutely renounced the use of bread and meat, to live entirely on potatoes. She has done more; as amongst potatoes there are some which multiply faster than others, she has taken as her food the *lumpers*, the least agreeable to the taste, but which are redeemed in the eyes of the Irishman by their prodigious abundance.

It seems, at the first glance, that for a population which derives subsistence from the soil with so much difficulty, every diminution of number would be an immense benefit; still if the question be investigated, it will be found that the emigration of four or five millions of Irishmen would not necessarily produce for the four or five remaining millions better or more certain means of subsistence. In fact, whence does it arise, that the agricultural produce of Ireland does not appear sufficient for the support of the population? It is not because the country does not supply sufficient food for eight millions of men; everybody knows that this fertile country could easily support twenty-five millions of inhabitants. Why then does the third of that number live so wretchedly? Because, before asking from the land and its produce what is necessary for his subsistence, the Irishman must first take what is necessary to pay the rent to his landlord. This explains why, in a land capable of giving bread to

twenty-five millions of persons, eight millions with difficulty find support from the cultivation of the worst kind of potatoes. If these eight millions of Irishmen wished to feed on corn, nothing would be more easy, for the land furnishes far more than their necessities require, but then they could not pay their rents to the lords of the soil. Now see how the Irish cultivator is obliged to act; he sows a part of his land in corn to sell the harvest, and he plants a small spot in potatoes, on the produce of which he lives. In the first case he hopes to derive from the land the best kind of harvest, with the price of which he will pay his rent; and in the second, to obtain the more abundant produce capable of supplying his more imperious wants; and as the rent which the landlord requires from him is constantly raised, he constantly enlarges the space on which he raises the articles that he sells, whilst he as constantly narrows the space on which he produces the potatoes that support him. Now suppose that the landlords of Ireland see nothing but what is natural and regular in this distress of the agricultural population; suppose it one of their familiar principles that the tenant should derive no profit from the culture of the soil, but just so much as is absolutely necessary to his support; finally, suppose that this principle should be so rigorously applied by Irish landlords, that every more economical mode of life discovered by the tenants necessarily leads to the augmentation of their rents. In this hypothesis, which to everybody who knows Ireland is a sad reality, what would be the consequence of a diminution of population?

The soil of Ireland having to feed a less number of inhabitants, would they hereafter be maintained in a better position? Not at all. For if, instead of continuing to eat potatoes, they began to feed on bread, the landlord would see in this change an increase of prosperity and a sign of fortune which would at once induce him to raise the rent. In order to pay this larger sum, the poor tenant should at once revert to his former system; if he delayed, he would be soon ejected for non-payment of rent, and his miseries would begin again as before. Thus, after millions of Irishmen were removed from Ireland, the condition of the remaining population would not, perhaps, be at all changed, but would remain equally miserable. Hence we can understand why Ireland a century ago, with only a third of the present inhabitants, was just as indigent as she is now, and subject to the same causes of misery, independent of number.

Now, if it were true that the Irish population might be considerably diminished without any amelioration of its condition, it would follow that a system of emigration which rests entirely on the efficacy of this diminution must vanish completely.

Still, suppose that the primary basis of the system has not been overthrown; that the utility of diminishing the population of Ireland were, on the contrary, well established, and that the emigration of some millions offered an efficacious and undisputed remedy for the evils of Ireland. We may admit this hypothesis, because, though the depopulation of Ireland might not produce the expected advantages, it might

lead to other salutary effects which would give it value. Would it not, in the first place, be profitable to the emigrants? It seems that to whatever other part of the world they were transferred, they would be more comfortable, at least less miserable, than in Ireland. Would not the remaining population, at least in the first instance, be reduced by the departure of some millions of labourers, its competitors? Delivered at once from its most idle and turbulent population, the country would become more calm; this repose would profit England herself, who always feels the rebound of the agitation in Ireland; and if it were true that the absence of three or four millions of Irishmen from Ireland, only for a few years, would spare her the trouble caused by that country, would not this be sufficient inducement to adopt a system of emigration?

Admitting, then, that the emigration of a portion of the Irish people would be sufficiently profitable to Ireland and to England to merit examination, let us inquire if it would be possible. This examination will not appear unprofitable, if we reflect on the multitude of persons in England prejudiced in favour of a vast system of emigration.

And let us first remark, that this emigration must be on an immense scale, or it will be absolutely fruitless, at least in an economical point of view. To judge what it must be in order to be efficacious, let us consider what takes place at present in Ireland. There is not, perhaps, one county in Ireland from which thousands of the inhabitants do not emigrate every year. Nevertheless, it has been established by official

inquiries, that this emigration, more or less advantageous to those who depart, produces no sensible effect on the condition of those who remain. It has been found that in the parishes from whence there was the greatest emigration, the wages of day labourers have not been raised one farthing, and the employment of the labourers who remained in the country has not been increased by a single day's work.[4] In certain counties it would be necessary to remove nine-tenths before the inhabitants would derive any sensible benefit from emigration.[5] It is astonishing to see how quickly the void created by emigration is filled, and it is not easy to discover by what enchantment the paupers who depart have their places supplied by other paupers. Millions of Irishmen must, therefore, be removed from Ireland, or the effects of emigration will be imperceptible. But such an emigration is at once singularly difficult and expensive.

Whither are three millions of emigrants to be conveyed? Assuredly, of all countries England is that to which this difficulty would be the slightest, for she has colonial establishments in all parts of the globe, and her navies give her free access to the countries which she does not possess. But all vacant territories would not be equally suited to Irish emigration.

The largest and most fertile would be Australia. But how could the poor population of Ireland be sent to a place designed to receive the criminals of England? Ireland, perhaps not without reason, would regard the proceeding as an insult; and this impression, right or wrong, would render the enterprise

impossible. Would the United States of America be their destination? This country would certainly be the best and most prosperous for the emigrants that could be chosen; but is it to be believed, if the United States were menaced with the invasion of three or four millions of Irishmen, that the government of the country would leave the American ports open to these swarms of paupers? I may be allowed to doubt it. Ireland sends some thousands of poor emigrants every year already to the United States, and this moderate current of emigration has already raised so much clamour in the country, that it has been several times debated, whether the ports of the United States ought not to be closed against Irish emigrants, either by a formal interdiction, or a tax sufficiently high to serve as a prohibition.[5]

Canada remains. It is, in truth, the natural asylum of Irish emigrants. Canada is of all the British colonies the least distant from Ireland; it is a country that has become English, thanks to the cowardice of Louis XV. and his court. Many Irish are settled there already who would receive the new-comers; and though the best lands of this colony are already occupied, a sufficiently large extent still remains to receive for a long time the surplus of English population. Still it is matter for inquiry, whether, when the English power is tottering in Canada, it would be prudent to reinforce that country with some millions of men, who, as Irishmen, instinctively detest the English yoke, and as Catholics would be the natural allies of that part of the Canadian population most hostile to England.

Still let us further suppose, that these different objections against Australia, Canada, and the United States, have been obviated—suppose that a place for emigrants has been found, the first difficulty is overcome; but how many others instantly present themselves!

It is by no means a trifling enterprise to transport several millions of men eight or ten thousand miles across the ocean. Experience shows us, that for a long voyage a vessel ought, in general, to carry less than a thousand passengers; let us, however, take a thousand as the average. Adopting this base, a hundred voyages out and home would be required to the emigration of one hundred thousand persons, that is to say, only a small fraction of the population that it would be necessary to remove. How many years would be necessary for such transport, even if England were to devote all her navy to it, though her fleets have plenty of occupation elsewhere? Nevertheless, to obtain the proposed end, a sudden and complete emigration of all the population deemed superabundant is required; every slow and partial emigration would afford no remedy for an evil so prompt to renew itself as fast as it is cured.

But let us go further: suppose that the transport of the emigrants, which appears impossible, could be effected, the expenses of this transport would be so great as to present a new obstacle. In fact, it has never entered into the heads of the warmest advocates of Irish emigration to limit themselves to shipping off some hundreds of the poor Irish, and setting them

ashore, naked or covered with rags, in a new country. To treat the poor Irish thus, would be to serve them worse than the malefactors transported to Australia, and settled there at great expense. Even if this course of conduct were adopted at the request of the emigrants themselves, it would still be without excuse. No one is ignorant of the extreme distress to which poor families are consigned, who, flying from misery in their own country, and destitute of capital, go in search of better fortunes to a distant land, where they only find trials still more frightful. We can understand why a government may leave such acts of imprudence free; but, assuredly, it should never become an agent in them. In England it has been always considered an essential feature in every system of emigration, that the government should make provision for the passage and all the expenses of the emigrant from his first starting to his arrival at his destination, and all the expenses of his first establishment. Now the total amount of these expenses is enormous. In 1826, they were estimated at 60*l.* for every family of five, or 12*l.* a head.[6] But if we turn from estimates to actual experiments, we shall see that the expenses absolutely necessary exceed this amount, and that the emigration of a family of five involves an outlay of 100*l.*, or 20*l.* a head.[7] Consequently, the emigration of four millions of persons would cost 80,000,000*l.*! Taking the smaller amount, 12*l.* a head, it would come to 48,000,000*l.* And supposing that only two millions emigrated, the expense would be 40,000,000*l.*, according to the estimate derived from direct experiment.

However interested England may be in removing the evils of Ireland, it is very doubtful whether she will ever have recourse to such an expensive remedy.[8]

Let us further admit, for a moment, that all the preceding objections and improbabilities have been obviated; another obstacle would remain, more difficult to be overcome than all the others. It would not be sufficient that three or four millions should have the physical possibility of leaving Ireland; it would be further necessary that they should be willing to do so. "It would be their interest to emigrate, and they would be wrong to refuse the means;"—such is our feeling. But would their judgment be in accordance with ours? Their refusal to emigrate would render the system impossible, for forced emigration is a penal exile. And on what would be founded the right of treating the poor Irish as malefactors? It would be first necessary to proclaim poverty a crime. Now, though in English habits poverty is, doubtless, a great misfortune, and sometimes almost a misdemeanour, it has not yet become a crime.

If voluntary emigration is the only possible system, we must conclude, that a system on such a scale as that which we have examined, can never be executed.

There exists in Ireland, as has been already stated, a free and spontaneous current of emigration. But we must remark, that in general it is not the poorest who emigrate. The emigrants belong chiefly to the middle classes; they are comfortable tradesmen, or small farmers, who, though already possessing some

comforts, are anxious to better their condition; who, possessing small capital, are anxious to find a country where a capital may be more safely invested than in Ireland.[9] They are in a large proportion Protestants; that is to say, persons of a condition above the common. In a word, all those who depart, are the persons whom the country is most interested to keep. And if the poor Irishman does not emigrate as well as the rich, it is not merely because he has physical means inferior to the rich, but because he has not the same inclination. In spite of all his miseries, the Irishman passionately loves his country, and seems attached to her by closer ties the more miserable he is. Perhaps it would be just to say, that attachment to country is in the inverse proportion of the comforts enjoyed in it. The English, whose physical comforts surpass those of any other people, understand less than any the links that bind man to his natal soil. He has tasted certain comforts which are absolutely necessary to him, and without which he cannot exist; when these comforts begin to fail in his native land, he seeks them elsewhere; and even when not deprived of them, he constantly seeks their increase; his country is the land where he can obtain the greatest amount of happiness. The poor Irishman, on the contrary, does not seek after enjoyments of which he has never formed a notion; having never known of anything but a miserable existence, he does not suspect that any other is possible in this world; a great enterprise, undertaken to procure happiness of which he is incredulous, has no charms for him. He

remains on the spot of his present misery, little anxious to search for fresh misfortune at a distance; and it is some consolation for him to bear the load of life in the country where he was born, where his father and mother lived and died, and where his children will have to live and die.

If, then, emigration were offered to those millions of Irishmen whose absence is so desired, the greater number would not accept it. We may add, that many who are desirous to emigrate would cease to have the wish, if the plan of emigration should be formed and executed by the English government. The Irishman with difficulty believes that *he* can derive any benefit from such a source: and in this case, are not his fears natural? Setting aside every cause of political distrust what terrible risks must the unfortunate beings run, whose emigration becomes an official function of the government? Who is to guarantee to the poor emigrants that they will receive the care and attention designed for them? Are not they justified in fearing everything? Are they very sure that once embarked, and the ocean interposed between them and their country, they will not be cast on some unknown and desolate shore, to die of famine, cold, and misery?[6] A terrible responsibility weighs on the head of a family who engages his wife and children in this perilous path. People may persist in believing that he is wrong not to emigrate, if the means are afforded him, but everything shows that, guided by his own judgment, interests, and passions, the poor Irishman will not emigrate.

These difficulties are so great and obvious, that the most ardent partisans of emigration cannot mistake them. Still they do not abandon their favourite theme, they modify it, and, restricting their system in the hope of rendering it more easy, they still believe it the best means of safety for Ireland. Let us, then, examine their subsidiary plan.

The reader has already seen the extreme division of the soil: its being portioned into small farms of one, two, or three acres, has infinitely multiplied the number of agriculturists in Ireland. This multitude of occupants, surcharging the land, is, as some people say, one of the principal causes of Irish misery: and the natural remedy, they say, would be to destroy small, and establish large farms. But, in the first place, in order to abolish the small farms, you must remove the small farmers; and how can these expulsions be effected in a country where those who are ejected wreak the most terrible reprisals, and the most cruel revenge? To this the Englishman will answer, "The dispossessed tenants must emigrate." Let us examine, attentively, the different systems of emigration proposed for Ireland, and we shall find that, at the bottom of all, the predominant idea is the diminution of the agricultural population.

But, within such restricted limits, would a system of emigration be more practicable than that we have just examined? . . . No. It may be said that it would be less so. In fact, out of the five millions of agriculturists existing in Ireland, there are certainly more than two millions who, in the system of the

English economists, must be regarded as superabundant, and who consequently should emigrate. Now we have already seen what enterprise and expense the emigration of such a number would involve; and if it be true that such obstacles are sufficiently grave to prevent England from effecting the emigration of millions of poor Irishmen, whose misery is to her a source of alarm; how are we to believe that she would be tempted to surmount the same difficulties for the mere purpose of diminishing the agricultural population of Ireland? It is evident, that if the emigration of the Irish farmers were possible, England would not undertake it, because their lot, compared with that of others infinitely more wretched, could only excite a secondary interest.

It may well be conceived, that a landlord would be more interested in the removal of an agriculturist who surcharges his estate, and whose weight is felt by him alone, than to clear Ireland of a pauper whose burthen is borne by the entire country. But what follows from this, except that the emigration of small farmers would be profitable to the rich? Another consequence would result, the Irish landlords, being the only persons interested in emigration, ought to bear the entire expense. Now, supposing that the Irish landlords had the power to effect this emigration, have they the will? . . Not they truly. . . It would be first necessary that they should feel that a diminution of the number of farmers would be useful to their interests; now, on the contrary, it is certain that the excessive number of cultivators, so far from

being regarded as an absolute evil by the greater part of Irish landlords, is considered by them, in some respects, as a real advantage.[7] We have seen above, that the emigration of 2,000,000 of souls would cost 40,000,000*l.*; now the entire rental of Ireland is estimated at about 6,000,000*l.*; so that the expenses of such an emigration would consume seven years of their revenues. We may then, without rashness, affirm that such sacrifices will not be made by an aristocracy that not only lives up to its income, but almost, as we may say, "from hand to mouth."

We must add, that the execution of a task so delicate and so extensive, would not only require the stimulus of private interest, but also the incentive of generous sentiment. The idea of emigration should be enforced with ardour and charity by the Irish landlords, as a means of relieving great sufferings, and establishing comforts on their estates. Now, how are we to believe that they, who, by their carelessness or selfishness, have allowed immense miseries to accumulate in Ireland, will display extraordinary zeal in their diminution? How are we to believe that they will do from remorse what they have not done from conscience? Is it reasonable to expect from them lively sympathies for those whom emigration will remove six thousand miles from Ireland, when they are so often found without pity for the frightful distress of which they are the witnesses? If the Irish landlords were capable of the sacrifices demanded of them, emigration would not now be necessary. The remedy would be useless, because the evil would not exist.

As the emigration of the agricultural population can neither be obtained from the English government, nor from the interests or sympathies of Irish landlords, a third system has been recently tried, under the authority of the law.[8] The counties are permitted to tax themselves for the purpose of facilitating emigration, and we may see, from the discussions on this enactment, that its principal object was to provide for the emigration of small tenants ejected from their farms.

It would be easy here to demonstrate the perils of such a system, fitted to encourage the selfishness of the rich, who, seeing for the future, in the gratuitous emigration of the ejected tenantry, a means of escape from the vengeance of the poor, will no longer be restrained by any check in their oppression of the agricultural population; and on the faith of this emigration, which, perhaps, will not take place, they will show themselves more severe than before, so as to provoke reprisals, the more formidable as they will be suspended over their heads, at the very moment that they believe them most distant. But, salutary or fatal, emigration restricted by such limits can only have a very partial effect. Reduced to these terms, it may protect or compromise some private interests; but the plan is not sufficiently extensive to produce a sensible influence on the social and political condition of Ireland.

Thus, everything in these various systems of emigration is defective: an efficacious emigration is impossible; that which is practicable would be vain and

incomplete. One set of difficulties only gives birth to another: the discovery of a proper country for the emigrants, the length of the voyage, the vast amount of expense, the complication of the enterprise, all prevent it; and when these objections are removed, a thousand others instantly appear. Emigration being rendered possible, it is not determined who are to emigrate; and the choice of emigrants being made, they will reject emigration. Finally, passing from one obstacle to another, from one impossibility to another, we at last lose sight of the point from which we started, and having in vain sought the means of clearing away the wretched and demoralised portion of the population, we at last come to applaud the discovery of a plan for exiling those who, in the present state of the country, are the most valuable to preserve. Even if all these impossible plans of emigration could be effected, would the slightest good result to Ireland? Consult the annals of the country, and see what little influence all the violent enterprises and extraordinary accidents of depopulation have had on its social and political condition. Calculate all who perished in Ireland during the wars of religion;—count the thousands slaughtered by Cromwell, and the thousands he transported to the colonies;—consider the hundreds of thousands carried off by famine, whose number in one year (1740) surpassed forty thousand;—forget not the thousands destroyed by the plague and national wars at various times;—take into account those who are constantly wasted away by disease and misery;—omit not the estimate, formerly very large,

of those who perished by the hand of the executioner; —finally, attend to the twenty-five or thirty thousand Irishmen taken away every year by the natural course of emigration: and when these facts have been verified, investigate the consequences: when, in the midst of these various changes, you will find Ireland the same at all epochs, always miserable in the same degree, always overstocked with paupers, displaying the same deep and hideous wounds; you will then confess that the evils of Ireland do not arise from a surplus population; you will see that it is the nature of its social state to produce profound indigence and infinite distress; that if, by some magic spell, millions of paupers could be at once transported from Ireland, their place would soon be filled by the overflowing of that well-spring of misery which is never dried up; consequently, our attention must be bestowed, not upon the amount of the population, but upon the institutions of the country.

Here, again, we are brought back to the first cause of the evil, and to the question of determining what reforms should be made in institutions whose vices continually reappear as the source of all evils; but the time is not yet come for discussing that question. At present, it is sufficient to have shown that a remedy for the evils of Ireland would be vainly sought in emigration.

## Sect. III.—*Poor Laws.*

The English parliament, within a short interval, has passed two laws which alone would enable us to judge between the English aristocracy and that of Ireland.

In England, public charity had been practised for centuries so generously and imprudently by the upper classes, the poor rates consequently pressed so heavily on property, that it was at length necessary to check the abuses of indiscriminate relief, and to force the rich to be less benevolent to the poor. Such was one of the principal objects of the New Poor Law enacted in 1834.[1]

In Ireland, on the contrary, the absolute want of public charity, or individual sympathy of the rich for the poor, produced from year to year, and from age to age, so enormous an accumulation of extreme misery, that it became necessary to introduce into that country a part of the principle which was reformed in England, and to constrain the rich in Ireland to give some relief to the poor, whilst in England they were restrained from giving too much: this was the object of the statute enacted by parliament in 1837.[2]

This law commands the erection of a certain number of workhouses, to be supported at the expense of the landlords of the county. And this poor law, say some, in the absence of manufactures and emigration, will save Ireland.

Numerous benefits are expected from it: regarded

in an economic point of view, it will support millions of unemployed labourers: considered in its political bearing, it will extinguish the anarchical passions which have their source in extreme indigence; and examined in its social aspect, it will serve to reconcile the rich and the poor, as the sufferings of the latter will be greatly alleviated; such are the promises made by the new law, but which seem difficult for it to perform.[3]

Doubtless it appears rash to pronounce judgment on an experiment now in progress, which has only just commenced its trial, and the issue of which cannot be known. Still, recognising all that in such an enterprise the future veils from our eyes, are there not parts of it which human intelligence can penetrate? If we cannot tell all the consequences of the New Poor Law in Ireland, can we not at least foresee with some certainty the effects which it will not produce? and without predicting the entire fate of this measure, may we not affirm that it will not realise the great hopes that are reposed in it? Will not one of these two things necessarily happen; either the law will be enforced extensively enough to render it efficacious, and then it will become an impossibility—or it will only be executed as far as it is practicable, and then it will become powerless, if not pernicious?

Its influence would doubtless be felt if, through its means, the two or three millions of paupers in Ireland receive at once public and legal aid from society. It would be, it is true, a great question to determine how far such influence would be salutary; all, per-

haps, would not be beneficial in an institution which, while it gave to millions of individuals the privileges of pauperism, inflicted on them also its disgraces and its vices. We may doubt whether the supplying with food these two millions would sensibly change the condition of four or five millions more, who are scarcely less miserable; and we may be allowed to fear that a measure, destined to relieve the misery of the country, may render it more incurable by reducing it to a regular system. But supposing that such a measure could have a favourable result, is it practicable? Is there a possibility of supporting two or three millions of individuals on public charity? No; the simplest calculation will prove it.

Suppose that society takes charge of the two millions of paupers—the lowest estimate that can be admitted. Humanity, doubtless, would admit a less, but the estimate cannot be reduced, if it is intended that the relief given the Irish poor should produce a social and political effect. Now, suppose the very cheapest food to be given to these two millions of paupers, barely as much water and potatoes as will be sufficient to support life. The expense for each person will doubtless be very little; take it at twopence a day for each individual; nevertheless, the sum-total would amount to more than 6,000,000*l.* annually.

What poor law will be established in Ireland at such a price? Who will pay the expenses? It is not to be supposed that England will add millions to her debt, to bestow them in alms on the Irish; and if

such a tax should be levied on the Irish landlords, it would absorb their entire rental, so that it would be better at once to pass an agrarian law. And even if these 6,000,000*l.* were obtained, and ever so wisely applied to the profit of the two millions of paupers, could it be said that a legal system of public charity existed in Ireland?

Is a cheap ration of potatoes flung to the indigent in the public street, assistance worthy of the state? Must not a house be prepared for the pauper when he requires shelter? Is it enough to appease his hunger when he is famishing? Must he not be clothed when he is naked? Must he not receive medical aid in sickness, and be buried when he dies? Food, clothing, lodging, an hospital, a grave, are the primary necessities of every christian and civilised society, and cannot be omitted in any system of public charity.

When a government dispenses charity, it cannot administer it like a private individual. The private person, who from his limited means offers incomplete succour to his fellow man, seems always to go beyond what he can afford, because in reality he always does more than he ought. A similar judgment is not formed of society, which, when it takes up the burden of public charity, is always supposed sufficiently strong to bear it, and people are inclined to accuse it of parsimony, even when it shows itself generous beyond its means.

Must we now investigate how many millions should be added to the six millions to procure Ireland a sys-

tem of charity, I will not say equal to England, but simply such a one as public authority could recognise? Such calculations would evidently be superfluous; it would be like an attempt to carry the heavier burthen after a vain effort to lift the lighter.

Thus, to be perfectly complete, the public administration of charity in Ireland would require sums too enormous to be calculated; and reduced to almost contemptible proportions, its expenses, though less, would still infinitely exceed the will of England and the means of Ireland.

When the English legislators gave Ireland a poor law, they saw very clearly the extent of the difficulties just explained; and, seeing that it was impossible to offer even the coarsest relief to all the existing paupers, they deemed it necessary to direct their attention to restricting the number of persons relieved.

But how, when a system of public charity is established in a country where paupers are found in millions, can the object be attained of succouring only a small number of them? The new law has adopted two principal means to this end. First, it has not conferred on the Irish poor an express right to relief; and second, it has annexed conditions to the distribution of charitable relief which are not of a nature to render it desirable; so that the poor have neither a right to ask for charity, nor a great wish to obtain it.

It would be a great mistake to suppose that the principle of public charities, which has been recently introduced into Ireland, is the same as that which has prevailed in England since the reign of Elizabeth.

Public charity, but not legal charity, has been established in Ireland; and this is a very important difference. The character of public charity is to have the agents of authority for its officers, as is the case in France. But what constitutes legal charity is, that the distributor, whether a public authority or a private individual, cannot refuse the pauper who demands it, and, in case of a groundless refusal, can judicially compel relief to be afforded. Such is the English system. In Ireland, charity will be public, since its management will be entrusted to public officers; but it will not be legal, for the poor who will receive it will not have the right to demand it; and all those to whom it may be refused will have no coercive means to enforce relief.[4] This principle being established, it is at once seen how the administrators of the law will have a right to reduce as much as they please the number of persons to whom relief is to be granted. We see how, being armed with discretionary power, they will always be able to proportion the amount of relief granted to the amount of expense that is possible; and we can understand that if the resources of the country will not allow them to afford assistance to more than eighty or a hundred thousand individuals, they will be at perfect liberty not to assist a greater number.

But, at the same time that we see the means by which the law has been rendered practicable, we may also see how it will become absolutely inefficacious; in fact, we may ask of what consequence to the welfare or repose of the country will be relief given to a

hundred thousand paupers; that is to say, less than one tenth of the paupers of Ireland?

Besides, is it deemed an easy task to choose out of the two or three millions of paupers that Ireland contains, these eighty or a hundred thousand privileged paupers, to whom alone public relief will be given? I can clearly see the right of making the choice, but I cannot comprehend on what principle the selection will be made.

Will an effort be made to afford relief only to the most extreme destitution? But, in the first place, it will be necessary to determine it. Now, how is a distinction to be made amongst the millions of voices which will raise the same cry of distress? Who will possess the magic secret for divining the different degrees of suffering in conditions perfectly similar. There is an excessive misery in which the degrees, if any exist, cannot be marked. Who can tell which is the most hungry in the midst of famishing millions? In no country, perhaps, is there so uniform a type of misery as in Ireland. See what incredible efforts every one of these millions of paupers makes to appear the poorest of all; what an emulation in indigence!—what a rivalry in rags, in real or feigned diseases, in true or simulated sores!—what a prize offered to imposture! Observe that if all these paupers were themselves willing in good faith to tell which of them are most wretched, they would be sorely puzzled to do so: how then are you to succeed in discovering the truth amid so many efforts made to lead you astray?

The distribution of public charity is already a very difficult and delicate task in a country where poverty is a rare case, and misery the exception. How then is it to be accomplished in a nation where indigence is in some sort the common lot, and the condition superior to poverty an accident? How is the pauper to be discerned in a nation of paupers?

Evidently, whatever may be done in the absence of all legal rule and all moral means of judgment, the execution of the law will be forcibly brought to the mere simple procedure of arbitrary selection. But an arbitrary power is precisely the most dangerous vice that can be found in any institution given to Ireland. This country has been so long the sport of caprice and tyranny, that it with difficulty believes in the impartiality of those who govern it; and supposing that the selection of Irish paupers should be made equitably, it would be sufficient that it was made arbitrarily to persuade the people of its injustice. Thus, whilst the assistance given to the paupers relieved will only slightly ameliorate their condition, we may reckon on the fact, that the paupers to whom public charity will be refused, will believe themselves the victims of the most iniquitous exclusion.

Seeing that it was not less difficult to make a selection of paupers than to succour all, the English legislators have had recourse to a second expedient to diminish the amount of relief. They considered that, as it was impossible to relieve all claimants, it was necessary to labour that all paupers should not make

claims; and in order to limit their number, they have surrounded the charity with all circumstances fit to make it repulsive.[5]

The poor law for Ireland consequently enjoins the erection of eighty or a hundred workhouses, where relief will be granted. These establishments, each of which will contain a thousand inmates, are to be subjected to a rigid discipline. Every poor person will not of necessity be admitted, but no one will receive relief if he does not enter and remain within the precincts of the walls. There the husband will be separated from his wife, the mother from her children. The name of these asylums would seem to show that they are designed for places of labour, but the impossibility of suddenly creating eighty or a hundred thousand manufactories, and of finding employment for eighty or a hundred thousand paupers in a country where the free labourers can scarcely find employment, sufficiently proves that they will be completely idle. Thus all the miseries, all the sufferings, and all the corruptions of poverty, and all the vices of idleness, will be found jumbled and united on the same spot.[6] It has been supposed that the necessity of entering these establishments, in order to obtain relief, will greatly diminish the number of claimants; and doubtless the calculation is very just, for it is impossible to see how the condition of the paupers will differ from that of persons imprisoned for crime.

Is it not necessary here to state frankly the true character of such a law? Whether does it contain a principle of charity or of severity? With one hand it

offers alms to the Irish poor, with the other it opens to them a prison. This prison, it is true, will only receive those who wish to enter, and in truth also they will be at liberty to depart when they please. But if they do not enter, they will not receive relief, and the relief will cease when they depart. In fine, it is succour offered to the poor of Ireland on the condition that, in order to receive it, they must abandon their liberty, and throw themselves into the focus of corruption.

It has been supposed that this excessive severity might be justified by the example of England, in which, since the celebrated reform of 1834, similar establishments, subjected to like regulations, have had, they say, the salutary effect of diminishing the number of paupers who claimed relief, and at the same time of affording shelter to those whose distress was real. But is it not easy to see how different are both the principles and the facts of the two countries?

In England, the fundamental principle of the old poor law, that is to say, the legal right of the poor to charitable relief, still exists. The reform of 1834 did not abolish this principle, it only modified its execution. Formerly, the English pauper received parochial relief proportioned to his exigencies in his own house. Nothing, without doubt, could be more convenient to the indigent than this parochial assistance coming to him in his cottage, in the midst of his family, his domestic habits and ease; but also no form of charity was more productive of abuse. To remedy

this evil, it has been ruled that, besides out-door relief, there should be relief given in the workhouse; and it has been established that the overseers may, at their discretion, grant or refuse out-door relief; and that they are bound to yield to the demand of the pauper only when, on claiming relief, he is ready, if required, to enter the workhouse before receiving it. Thus the English pauper has preserved the chance of being relieved according to the old form of English charity, and he has the certainty of being assisted according to the new. It is evident, therefore, that the condition of the English pauper is theoretically different from that of the Irish pauper, who can in no case obtain relief without losing his liberty, and who, though unable to obtain relief except in a kind of prison, has not the right, but merely the chance, of admission.

But the cases are even more different in fact than in theory. In England, there are paupers, but not a nation of paupers; the mass of the population is employed, and those who pretend that they want work would easily obtain it, if they did not take greater pleasure in idleness, and preferred living on public charity, rather than their own industry. It may be conceived that, in such a country, a discretionary power may be given without inhumanity to the dispensers of public charity, who, without forbidding the milder form of relief in favour of the irreproachable indigent, may adopt a more rigid system to distress those suspected of idleness. Such a power could not produce much severity in a country where the mode of assistance most agreeable to the poor man is deeply

rooted in the habits and manners of the people; and there is much more reason to fear, that the power given by law to be less indulgent may never be exercised.

The institution of workhouses for the poor in England has a moral aim which is easily understood; it is a menace against voluntary idleness, pretending to be unfortunate: and when a pauper pretends that he is in want, it is a standard by which the reality of his distress may be tested.

But what can be the merit of such an institution in Ireland, where, if all doubtful cases of indigence were removed, there would still remain millions in undisputed destitution; where these millions of paupers are plunged into distress, absolutely independent of their will; where they do not work, not because they will not, but because they cannot; where this impossibility of obtaining any employment is not accidental and transitory, but continuous and permanent? To apply the English system to the Irish poor is cruel or absurd, or both.

To try by any moral influence to force people to work, who are physically incapacitated from working, is nonsense. And if, by this influence, those to whom succour has been promised, are kept from the place where relief is afforded—men to whom relief is absolutely necessary for existence—what can be said, except that a hypocritical engagement has been made, which must be violated at all hazards, and a way of escape opened from the obligations of impossible charity by the adoption of inhuman expedients?

We have shown how the conditions annexed to this charitable relief will prevent its being sought by those to whom it is most necessary. Still there is a case in which, according to all probability, a vast number will claim public aid in spite of the severities attached to it; I mean those epochs of general distress when famine rages amongst the people, and where the physical necessity of supporting life overcomes all moral repugnance. But then it is not by hundreds or thousands, or hundreds of thousands, it is by millions that the Irish will rush to the house of charity, for at these frightful seasons an awful level of misery is established in Ireland. Now, where are the means of satisfying these famishing multitudes? Thus, when relief will be possible, it will be so trammelled as not to be sought, and when extreme circumstances arise to give it some value, it will at once be claimed by so great a multitude as to render it impossible.

But the poor law granted to Ireland would be only half deficient, if it were merely powerless; does not everything seem to show that it will be pernicious?

The simple fact of its inutility would be a real evil. England is persuaded, that by founding this institution she has done much for Ireland, and believing that she has applied a remedy to the evils of the country, is tempted to remain quiet, at least for some time, in the satisfaction arising from the feelings of having accomplished a great duty.

And in Ireland will not this law at first excite amongst the people hopes that it cannot realise? When an institution of public charity was announced

to Ireland, the people took no account of the limits by which it was to be restricted. They believed that henceforth the poor would be supported by the public; and this opinion was the more readily adopted, because Ireland, though she has never possessed the English system of charitable relief, is acquainted with its principles and traditions. But when, instead of seeing distress succoured, it will be found that only a coarse relief is given to a few select paupers, will not the disappointment be felt as a cruel deception? and will not suffering Ireland, having been led to expect a great alleviation of her evils, be irritated at comparing the wretched alms she receives with the immense benefits she expected to receive?

Though powerless to assist the people, this law will probably not be inefficacious in their further demoralisation. There are in Ireland numbers of paupers, who, though they can get no work, have an eager desire to work, and who make great efforts to create means of subsistence. Here now is an institution which suggests to them the fatal notion, that it is possible to live without work, and that the public will assist every one in need. How many, on the faith of this chimerical expectation, instead of looking for employment, so difficult to be found in Ireland, will wait inactively, resigned beforehand to the misfortune of never seeing it arrive. How many will prefer to ill-paid labour, the chances of charity bestowed on idle poverty?

But this institution not only risks depraving the people without aiding them; it will, perhaps, deprive the poor of the little charitable relief they

receive at present. Hitherto there existed in Ireland no general system of public charity; still the poor were not wholly destitute of assistance; not that the rich succoured them, but that the poor gave to the poor. What must result when the law solemnly declares, that the burthen of supporting the poor will fall upon the rich? All the poor of Ireland, no doubt, will unanimously applaud the equity of such a principle; but will not the lower classes believe that they are not henceforth bound to the obligation of mutual charity? And when the poor mendicant will present himself, as of yore, at the house of the small farmer, will he not be repulsed by being told to go to the neighbouring town, where there is public relief for the poor?[8] Should matters thus turn out, it will follow that, the law which promises Ireland illusory aid, will deprive the poor Irish of the only real assistance they possess.

And how are we to find, in such a law, the means of drawing closer the rich and the poor in Ireland? The most zealous partisans of the institution admire, as they say, its power of inspiring the Irish landlords with salutary terror, as the poor rates will be levied on their estates. They suppose that henceforth the rich will feel more sensibly the misery of the poor; that he will be interested in preventing it, and checking its growth. But these menaces addressed to the strong are dangerous for the weak. It is designed to force the rich man to aid the pauper whom he sees dying of hunger; this is a violence very difficult to practise. Charity is not thus constrained. There is

reason to fear, that after having bestowed charity on the poor, the landlord will discover the means of taking back from the poor what he has reluctantly given, and that setting a higher price on his land, already over-rented, he may indemnify himself for the alms thus extorted. The law risks the chance of rendering the rich more hostile to the poor by the very means taken to inspire them with more humane sentiments.

"If this institution is not calculated to inspire the upper classes with better feelings towards the poor, we are equally at a loss to know how it will render the latter less hostile to the rich. Were the law efficacious and salutary, it is doubtful if the indigent population would take any notice of the landlords, whom it would regard as passive distributors of compulsory benevolence. What, then, must be the effect on a people of a law fraught with such perils; in which we can see the germ of so many evils, and which appears inoffensive only where it is found powerless? Does any one wish to know what the poor of Ireland will say, when the ephemeral illusions of unreflecting hope are dispelled? They will say that the law was good, but that its agents have made it bad; that the measure was charitable, but the execution of it inhuman; and people will still find the means of charging the rich with the faults of an institution, which is vicious in its very principles. Sometimes they will blame the commissioners for not admitting enough of paupers into the workhouse; sometimes they will blame them for receiving too many into those mansions of corruption and idleness. These contradictory

reproaches, which, thus coarsely expressed by the people, may appear inconsistent, will, nevertheless, be both merited; for if it be a charity that is bestowed, those who receive it will have no stronger claim than the millions to whom aid is denied; and if, under the name of charity, it be a punishment that is inflicted on misfortune, though the rigour be voluntarily accepted, the number of those subjected to it will always be too great.

May we not, then, fear that this measure, designed to reconcile the rich and the poor, will only increase their mutual enmity and their reciprocal grievances against each other? How, then, can a remedy be found for the evils of Ireland in a measure which is likely to aggravate them still more?[9]

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## CHAPTER II.

### REMEDIES PROPOSED BY THE AUTHOR—THE CIVIL, POLITICAL, AND RELIGIOUS PRIVILEGES OF THE ARISTOCRACY MUST BE ABOLISHED.

We have seen how chimerical are the various extraordinary means of safety tried or proposed for Ireland; a multitude of other analogous plans might be discussed, whose total inutility may be shown by a very brief examination.

What, then, must be done in the painful and formidable condition of Ireland? How is she to be left

without a remedy for such calamities and such perils? What is the advantage of trying useless remedies? What complicates the difficulty is, that it is not enough to find measures good in themselves; it is further required that their application should be practicable. It is not sufficient to discover the system of administration best suited to the state of Ireland; it must also be adapted to the taste of England.

Is it not better, then, first to consider, abstractedly, what the interests of Ireland, taken apart, and by herself, would require?—reserving for subsequent examination how far that which is desirable is practicable; if what ought to be done will be done; if the interests of England will allow that to be accomplished which the interests of Ireland demand.

We have seen in the preceding chapters, that all the evils of Ireland, and all its difficulties, arise from the same principal and permanent cause—a bad aristocracy, an aristocracy whose principle is radically vicious. What is the logical consequence to be deduced from these premises? Clearly, that in order to put an end to the misery of Ireland, it is necessary to do away with the aristocracy in that country; as, to abolish the effect, we must remove the cause.

Whence arises the inefficiency of all the measures tried or proposed? From this simple fact, that no one of these modes of cure applies to the primary cause of the disease.

Thus a means of alleviating the immense misery of the lower classes is sought in providing them indus-

trial employment by the establishment of manufactories; but it is soon seen that the agitation of the country, and the passions of the people against the rich, render such establishments impossible: that is to say, the remedy for the evil is rendered impossible by the evil itself.

It is proposed to relieve the country by the emigration of some millions of paupers; but besides the enterprise being impracticable, we may soon see that if millions of paupers were removed from Ireland by enchantment, they would soon be reproduced by her institutions, always fertile in the production of miseries of every kind: to act thus would be to suppress the effects, and leave the cause in full force.

It has been thought that the most painful wounds of the country might be cured by forcing on the rich obligations of charity towards the poor; but here we are again brought back to the very principle of the evil—that is to say, to the heart of the aristocracy, which rejects charity. And we see, though some wound may be healed, and some pains alleviated, the sufferings of the poor would again spring in multitudes from the inexhaustible source of tyranny. This source must be dried up; it is this primary cause that must be attacked; the evil must be assailed at its root; every remedy applied to the surface will only afford transitory relief.

The social and political state of Ireland is not a regular state; everything shows that it is vitiated at the core. The disorder appears not only in the in-

finite miseries and perpetual sufferings of the population; it is even seen in the means adopted to effect deliverance from those evils.

What is this association, leading the people in defiance of government, but organised anarchy? What must a country be, where this anarchy is the sole principle of order? What is it, I say, but a society whose head is at enmity with its body,—which is in perpetual rebellion against itself?—in which every rich man is hated, every law detested, every act of vengeance legitimate, every act of justice suspected? Here is a violent and anomalous position, in which a nation cannot long continue.

We may conceive Ireland cloven down and trampled under foot by its aristocracy for centuries, but we cannot comprehend when Ireland has arisen, the aristocracy and the people facing each other, the former still eager to oppress, the latter sufficiently strong to resist oppression, without bringing it to a close.

Though the necessity of reforming the Irish aristocracy should not be proved by what has been already stated, perhaps one single argument will suffice to demonstrate it. In fact, look at the alternative: if allowed to subsist, one of two things must be done—the aristocracy must be supported against the people, or the people allowed to overthrow it.

In the first case, the sustaining power must become the mere instrument of all the passions of this aristocracy,—of its desires as well as its hatreds;—must place the artillery of Britain at the disposal of every landholder who cannot get his rents from his tenants,—

must subject to arbitrary and terrible laws every county in which the poor make an attack on the rich and their properties:—can the Irish aristocracy, with any conscience, demand—can it even wish for such sanguinary protection?[1]

In the second case,—that is to say, if the people be supported against the aristocracy; or, what is nearly the same thing, left to itself,—the aristocracy, deprived of a support without which it cannot exist, is delivered over, without defence, to the most cruel reprisals; it falls, bound hand and foot, into the hands of an enemy, full of resentment, subject to all the vengeance and all the madness of a victorious party; and, in this case, it may be asked, whether destruction is not more humane than such a state of existence?

This destruction, equally just and necessary, would be singularly easy in Ireland. In the first place, it would be aided by the whole strength of national feeling. In England, where the aristocracy is still so powerful, and, I might almost add, so popular, there is scarce a suspicion of the feelings with which Ireland regards her aristocracy.

Generally contented with their lot, the lower classes in England do not dispute the privileges of the rich; I might almost venture to say, they take pleasure in them: they see with a sort of pride these immense fortunes, large estates, parks, castles, and splendid abodes of the aristocracy; and they say that if there were no lower ranks, such glorious opulence and national splendour would not exist. People may laugh at this indigent enthusiasm in the happiness of the

rich: I agree to it; but it is a proud thing for an aristocracy to have inspired such sentiments. In general, a poor Englishman regards the rich without envy, or at least without hatred. If he sometimes attacks him, it is without bitterness, and then he rather assails the principle than the man; the person most opposed to aristocracy shows a profound respect to aristocracy; whilst he blames the political privilege, he bows to the lord; and even when he affects to despise birth, he honours fortune. England, fondly attached to liberty, does not care about equality.

In Ireland, on the contrary, where the laws have never been anything but means of oppression for the rich, and resistance for the poor, liberty has less value, and equality greater. Doubtless there is too much of the English spirit in Ireland to allow of liberty being absolutely despised, or equality thoroughly comprehended; but the people is driven towards it by its most powerful instincts. In truth, there is nothing of philosophy or reason in its desire for equality. The feeling is still undefined in the soul, as the idea of it is still vague in the understanding; still it is the passion which seems destined to seize strongly on the heart, and which indeed is predominant there already. Equality is in all the Irishman's wants, though it be not in all his principles. He already loves equality in so far as inequality is odious, and established for the advantage of those whom he detests. I do not know that he has an enlightened taste for democracy; but most assuredly he hates aristocracy and its representatives. A remarkable fact! In England, in the

midst of feudal institutions singularly mingled with democracy, a good government has produced respect, and sometimes even a passion for aristocracy. In Ireland, unmingled aristocratic institutions, under the influence of pernicious policy, have developed democratic sentiments, instincts, and wants unknown in England.

The overthrow of the aristocracy, which would be so popular in Ireland, would also be easy, for at the same time that democracy is rising in that country, aristocracy is perceptibly on the decline. This aristocracy never possessed any great organic force.

What renders the English aristocracy particularly powerful, is the strict union of all the elements that compose it: large estates, great capitals, the church, the universities, medicine, the bar, arts and professions, form a compact association in that country, whose members have one common interest, passion, and purpose, the conservation of their privileges.

Nothing like this exists in Ireland. If we except the university, which is so closely connected with the church that it may be regarded as its twin sister, all the aristocratic elements are held together in Ireland by the feeblest of ties.

There is, indeed, a great and natural sympathy between the landlords and the ministers of the Anglican church; the same religion, the same passions, the same political interests. Rejected by the same hatred, they are disposed to approximate like two transported criminals in their place of exile. But their mutual relations have not that regularity which can,

alone be derived from real and solid union; neither resides habitually in Ireland, they only meet there by accident, they regard each other as if they met in a strange land; it is a transitory union, which, however sincere it may be deemed while it lasts, leaves no traces behind.

The great wealth and possessions of the church are, besides, a subject of jealousy, and an occasion of discord to the landlords. We have already seen with what emulation churchmen and laymen press upon the people; and how the exactions of one are injurious to the other. The tenant used to pay his landlord badly on account of the tithe he owed to the minister; the parson found it difficult to recover his tithe, because the landlord charged too high a rent. These rivals in extortion are, nevertheless, political allies; and after having mutually imputed to each other the miseries, famine, crimes, and desolation of the country, they renew their friendly intercourse; but their union, sufficiently apparent for the tyranny of the one to injure the other, is not sufficiently close to afford mutual strength to both.

The support which the aristocracy receives from its other auxiliaries is still more feeble and uncertain.

The municipal corporations, its most faithful allies, have long fallen into a state of discredit and disgrace, which renders the advantage of their assistance very doubtful; and the scandalous abuses in which they are steeped, imprint disgrace on the power they sustain, more injurious than the zeal they display in

its service. Besides, these corporations have not the strength which their great wealth gives the English corporations. Formerly, as Protestants, they had the monopoly of commerce, and all profitable industry; but, whilst this monopoly lasted, Irish industry was sacrificed to that of England. Their privileges, therefore, were worth little. To preserve them, they were, therefore, forced to place them at the mercy of England, whose yoke they endured for the sake of imposing their own. At present, they are delivered from the bonds of England, but we have already seen that since its enfranchisement, Irish industry creates more democratic properties than it does wealth in alliance with privilege.

We have seen that Catholics of the middle class have taken possession of the bar, formerly the ally of the Protestant aristocracy. Thus on all sides this aristocracy is feeble, divided and menaced in the small remnant of its strength. Aristocratic life, in fact, exists only in one body, the lords of the soil. There only can we find any accordance between the views of the members, any regular proceedings, any durability of union; but, even here, the most wealthy, that is, those who could give most power to their order, are out of the country.

Finally, the largest proportion of Irish landlords has recently fallen into a state of distress and degradation, which deserves to be considered. We have seen a description of the evils endured by the poor agriculturists of Ireland; the misery of the rich in that country would also furnish a very sad picture.

It is an undisputed fact, that most of the landlords are greatly embarrassed in their fortunes; they are crushed by a weight of debt, their estates are loaded with mortgages. Many of them, bound to pay interests equal to the whole amount of their rents, and perhaps even more, are but nominally proprietors of their estates. I have seen an estate of fifty thousand acres, bringing a rent of 20,000*l.*, out of which the proprietor only enjoyed about 500*l.* a year. Nothing is more common than to see receivers appointed over large estates, charged with collecting rents due to the landlord for the benefit of the creditors, and appointed, either by a court of law, or in consequence of a special agreement.

This distress of the Irish landlords, which goes on continually increasing, arises from several causes; but the first and chief is their own recklessness. They have for centuries thrown all the trouble of their affairs upon agents or middlemen; and now they begin to perceive that their affairs have been badly conducted, and that their fortune, instead of increasing, has declined. Another cause is their blind cupidity, which, by rendering their tenants miserable, has become a source of impoverishment to themselves. And then, as they are actually in a state of war with the population, this incessantly causes them great loss, without any other advantage than the pleasure of injuring the people in their turn. It would be difficult to form an idea of the number of cattle maliciously killed or mutilated every year on the lands of the rich; the quantity of wood

and houses burned, and of meadows dug or ploughed up. I find that in 1833 more outrages were committed in the province of Munster, for the mere purpose of injuring the landlords, than for the purpose of procuring any advantage to the perpetrators. Thus, in this catalogue of crimes I find only fifty-nine robberies, but I observe one hundred and seventy-eight outrages dictated by brutal and vindictive violence, which ruin the landlord without enriching the tenant.[2] I have said that nothing can compensate the poorer classes for want of sympathy in the rich: it must be added, that the rich can never find an adequate substitute for the sympathy of the poor: and when the poor hate the rich, there is no severity of law, no court-martial, no punishment, which can prevent the poor from labouring to effect the destruction of those whom they detest.

Finally, the indigence of the rich arises from the following final cause, of a more recent date. During the war of France with Europe, and especially from 1800 to 1810, England having been almost entirely reduced for subsistence to the resources of its own territory, Ireland, which had always been its most abundant granary, became more so than ever. The demand for the agricultural produce of Ireland became, consequently, so great, that the prices were raised out of all proportion. This state of things continuing from year to year, the landlord, perceiving that the harvests of their tenants rose to double or triple their value, raised their rents in the same proportion; and not foreseeing that this increase of for-

tune, so agreeable to their pride, would cease with the accident which gave it birth, they established the expenses of their households on this fragile base.

So long as the continental blockade continued, the Irish aristocracy was splendid and prosperous, and the peasants themselves suffered less; but peace having been restored to the world, the Irish corn market was deprived of its monopoly, agricultural produce lost its exaggerated value, and the fortune of all the landlords was suddenly reduced. Still, in spite of the reverse, which took away one half of their revenues, the rich did not diminish their expenses.

It is in the nature of aristocracies not to be able to retrench; they are erected on a pedestal, of which vanity is the base: now, vanity would cease to be itself, if it submitted to restriction or abatement. Such resignation is especially impossible in an aristocracy of wealth, for when fortune is the measure of rank, who would wish to humiliate himself by acknowledging the diminution of his riches?

The Irish landlords could not, and would not, diminish their outward show on the scale of their declining fortunes: continuing to live at the old rate with decreased resources, some have been completely ruined, and others are rapidly hastening to the same consummation; and rather than reform in their household one horse or one servant, they are about to fall from the summit of their pride into extreme indigence. It is a common weakness of mankind not to be able to support the approach of a light evil

whose hour is fixed, and to advance resolutely towards an immense inevitable misfortune, the date of which is uncertain. Aristocracy exaggerates all the vices, as well as all the virtues, which proceed from pride.

Whatever may be the fortunes of the Irish aristocracy, no tears will be shed over their fate. Why should any one be grieved to see the decrepitude of a body whose end is unavoidable? Left to itself, this aristocracy would probably perish. But ought it, infirm and impotent as it is, to be allowed to languish for years, perhaps for ages, and expire in slow agonies amidst the outrages it will excite, the miseries it will produce, and the curses it will bear to its very last hour? No; its weakness, instead of being its protection, should be its condemnation: it can never be anything to the Irish people, but the blood-stained phantom of a government; and, doubtless, it will never recover from the terrible attacks made upon it, when even its season of unresisted tyranny has sunk so low. It is, therefore, nothing better than a scourge and a nuisance, which should be removed as soon as possible.

## CHAPTER III.

### IT WOULD BE AN EVIL TO SUBSTITUTE A CATHOLIC ARISTOCRACY FOR THE PROTESTANT ARISTOCRACY.

It is not only the Protestant aristocracy that should be abolished in Ireland, but every kind of aristocracy. Nothing could be more pernicious than to erect a Catholic aristocracy on the ruins of a Protestant aristocracy. I have already shown that there is no greater peril to the middle classes in Ireland, than their inclination to seize the privileges of which the aristocracy will be despoiled. This danger, if it be not in the present, is certainly in the future. But it is not sufficient to state as a certain danger, the mere possibility of a Catholic aristocracy; we must also show why this chance is an evil.

Doubtless we may suppose, that if the upper classes, in possession of the soil, were Catholics, many of the oppressions which bear heavily on the Catholics would be removed or greatly alleviated; but then, what would be the fate of a million and a half of Protestants scattered over the surface of Ireland? Would not they risk encountering, from an aristocracy hostile to their creed, the same persecutions which Catholics endure at present? Would it

not be, in truth, the substitution of one tyranny for another? and then, it would be just as well to leave the present one to continue.

Besides, how far could a Catholic aristocracy in Ireland be beneficial to the Catholics themselves? Does any one suppose that it would display generosity, sympathy, and liberality to the people? Might it not offer a dangerous lure to the Catholic priesthood, and risk, by bringing that body over to itself, depriving the clergy of more influence than it would have retained by adhering to the people? But before interrogating the future, let us consult the past.

We have already seen that, in the confusion of political confiscations, a small number of Catholic families saved their properties and titles. There has been, then, constantly in Ireland the fragment of a Catholic aristocracy. Now, what assistance has it afforded to the population, professing the same creed as itself?

During the entire period of Protestant persecutions, persecuted itself, it thought far more of its own safety, than of that of the people; and for this it is not very much to blame. As it was rich, it had everything to fear from Protestant tyranny, which was directed far more against property than against creeds. The Catholic aristocracy was cautious of giving umbrage to its political enemies, and, consequently, did not venture to offer its friends any protection. It lived without ostentation or noise on its estates, miraculously preserved, and abstained from showing any dangerous sympathy for the lower

classes of Catholics. We should not require from men sacrifices beyond the reach of humanity. Was not the rich Catholic who adhered to his creed, in spite of the political disqualifications attached to its profession, performing a great duty?

But, if the Catholic aristocracy could not do more, did it sufficiently endeavour to establish between it and the poor those relations of benevolence on one side, and respect on the other, which form the aristocratic link between the poor and the rich? No. There was no close alliance formed between the rich and poor Catholics during the whole of the eighteenth century, at the time when it would seem that they ought to have been united by a common persecution. Besides the prudential motives which separated the rich from the poor, there was also a remnant of pride of race which prevented their intimate union; the few rich Catholics who escaped confiscation were of English descent, and accustomed to despise, as Irish, those with whom they were connected by religion.

But this old aristocracy of Ireland did not confine itself to refusing all political and social protection to the people. All the records of Irish history show that it oppressed those whom perhaps it might be excused for not defending. It did not escape the selfish passions that animated the Protestant proprietors, and showed itself to the full as severe and avaricious towards its tenants as they did, and in consequence provoked the same hatred. It is very difficult for a landlord to avoid endeavouring to get from his estates

as much as he sees his neighbours get from theirs. However that may be, the rich Catholics inflicted on the lower classes a social oppression precisely the same as that exercised by Protestant landlords; the people could not distinguish one from the other; it mixed both in its hatred, and in the popular outbreaks of vengeance assailed rich Catholics equally with rich Protestants. This explains why the Whiteboys attacked the first, just as well as the second. These popular outrages completed the separation between the people and the Catholic aristocracy; and thus, during the whole course of savage reprisals between the poor and the rich, the Catholics had no aid from the nobility or gentry of their own creed.

However, when Catholic Ireland struggled against its chains, and loudly proclaimed its determination to be free, we see this aristocracy partially appear on the stage: not that it came of its own accord, it was sought. There was need of it; for how could any enterprise be formed if a lord did not preside? It then gave the support which it dared not refuse.[1] But this alliance was of brief duration. The Catholic population of Ireland assumed sufficient courage to desire to send an address to George III., expressing the wishes of the country: the petition was prepared, the people assembled, tried its voice and its strength. At the sight of these movements, the Catholic aristocracy of Ireland, fearing to be compromised by adhering to the popular cause, separated itself from the people. This occurred in 1791. Still the national movement continued; the retreat of the Catholic aris-

tocracy taught the people to do without it; a plebeian[2] took the helm of affairs; victories were gained, checks experienced; and when the frightful crisis and the terrible storms had gone by,—when, after so many trials, the triumph of the people was finally assured, the Catholic aristocracy was seen to reappear;[3] it returned to the popular cause, which it had abandoned in the hour of danger, and vainly aspired to direct it; and now, placed between the Protestant power which it detests, and the Catholic people whose alienations it dreads, it has no resource but to disappear entirely: it either dissembles or departs.

I doubt whether such antecedents could be the starting-point for a good aristocracy. Yet this starting-point will no doubt have great influence in its consequences. The aristocracy which may be established will, it is true, spring in a great part from a new source, as already shown; but the present cannot be thus separated from the past; and whether the rising aristocracy of the middle classes attaches itself to the old branch of the Catholic aristocracy, or to the rotten trunk of the Protestant aristocracy, it will assuredly receive pernicious traditions and a fatal heritage.

The kind of instinctive and hereditary contempt which the rich feel in Ireland for everything that is poor and beneath them,—the prejudice which even amongst Catholics makes this contempt a sign of fashion and elegance,—the opinion so generally diffused, that the rich man has a right to oppress the poor man, and trample him under foot with impunity,

—such are the traditions from which a new aristocracy in Ireland cannot escape without great difficulty.

Were even these perils avoided, there are others from which this aristocracy could not escape; even though it would not merit, it would excite all the hatred shown to its predecessor: for the people of Ireland has also its tradition, which is to believe in the selfishness of the rich, and the right of the poor to detest them.

These mutual feelings of the poor and rich in Ireland are doubtless not graven for ever on the soul; if they were so, we might despair of the country and its future fate; for, whatever reforms may be made, rich persons will always be found amongst the people. But it is impossible that such sentiments, sealed in torrents of blood and ages of oppression, should not be long perpetuated; and they will be vivid in proportion as the new class of rich men retain the titles, privileges, and honours of the extinguished aristocracy. If the rich can ever be reconciled to the poor in Ireland, it must be by ceasing to appear before them surrounded by the same ensigns which, during centuries, were displayed by an odious aristocracy. It is also perhaps the only means for themselves to lose their pernicious habits of oppression and tyranny.

It will therefore not be enough to destroy the Protestant aristocracy; the very principle of aristocracy must be abolished in Ireland, in order that no other may take the place of that which must be suppressed. After the existing institution is humbled down, the

ruins must be cleared away, and the ground prepared for the erection of a very different edifice.

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## CHAPTER IV.

### HOW AND BY WHAT MEANS ARISTOCRACY SHOULD BE ABOLISHED IN IRELAND.

When I say that the Irish aristocracy must be destroyed, and its very roots extirpated, I am far from intending a violent and sanguinary destruction.

I do not agree with those who believe that, in order to establish order, prosperity, and union in a country, it is necessary to begin by massacring some thousands of persons, exiling those who are not murdered, seizing the property of the rich, and distributing it to the poor, &c. I at once reject all such measures as iniquitous, and I stop not to inquire if they be necessary. I believe, without any examination, that they are unnecessary, because they are not just, and because they are atrocious. It is in my eyes a vicious proceeding, when an injustice is about to be reformed, to begin by the perpetration of another, to commit a present and certain evil for the sake of a future and doubtful good. I distrust these criminal and doubtful means which the end must sanctify, and which, if the end fails, leave nothing but crime to those who

use them; or rather, I do not believe that criminal means can ever become honest. Besides, I cannot admit that injustice and violence can ever profit either nations or individuals. I esteem the progress of humanity too highly to believe that it will be profited by excesses which dishonour it. Does that crime really hasten liberty, which gives it a powerful impulse that endures but a day, and then retards it for centuries? Were it even proved that iniquity would be advantageous to the present generation, I could not be persuaded that it has the right to burden future generations with the certain expiation.

By abolishing the Irish aristocracy, I merely mean that it should be deprived of the political power, which it has used only for the oppression of the people; that it should be stripped of its civil privileges, which have been only the means of satisfying its selfishness; and that its religious predominance should be abated, which, though it no longer generates persecutions, perpetuates the remembrance of them.

### Sect. I.—*What should be done in order to abolish the privileges of the Aristocracy.—Necessity of Centralisation.*

To destroy the political power of the aristocracy, it would be necessary to deprive it of the daily administration of the laws, as it was formerly deprived of legislation. Consequently, the whole administrative and judicial system must be changed from top to

bottom, in so far as it rests on justices of the peace and the organisation of grand juries as at present constituted. In order to accomplish this destruction, power must be centralised.

If it is, in general, difficult to conceive any foundation for a new government without the aid of the central power, which commences with the destruction of the existing system, the assistance of this central power seems especially necessary when, before laying the basis for a new system of society, an aristocracy is to be overthrown. What means, in fact, are there of reaching the multitude of petty powers scattered over the surface of the country, all these local existences, all these individual influences peculiar to aristocracy, unless by concentrating the whole public strength on one single point, from which it might be brought to act against every condemned privilege and rebellious superiority?

In the countries where the best aristocracy exists, the central arm, when extended to strike them, is, in general, popular with the masses. This is sufficient to show how popular in Ireland a powerful system of centralisation would be, established on the ruins of a detested aristocracy, against which political hatred is mingled with religious hatred.

The more the state of Ireland is considered, the more clearly will it appear that, under all circumstances, a strong central government would be the best which that country could possess, at least for the present. A bad aristocracy exists, which there is an urgent necessity for destroying. But to whom must

the power wrested from its hands be entrusted? Is it to the middle classes? They are only beginning to exist in Ireland. The future belongs to them; but will they not compromise that future, if the power of leading society at the present is entrusted to their unskilled hands and violent passions?

Such is the present state of parties in Ireland, that justice cannot be obtained if the political powers are left in the hands of the Protestant aristocracy; and that it cannot furthermore be expected, if these powers are at once transferred to the rising middle classes of Catholics.

What Ireland wants is a strong administration, superior to parties, beneath whose shadow the middle classes might grow up, develope themselves, and acquire instruction, whilst the aristocracy would crumble away, and its last remains gradually disappear. Here is a great work to be accomplished, the execution of which is offered to the English government.

When I indicate centralisation as a means of reforming political society in Ireland, I hasten to explain my whole opinion on this head. I am assuredly very far from considering as salutary in itself the absolute principle of complete centralisation. There may be a central government of such a nature that it would be, in my opinion, worse than aristocracy itself. The principal vice of an aristocracy is, that it restricts by patronage the number of individual existences; but a single central power, which does everything and directs everything, not only diminishes but annihilates the political life of the citizens.

Although this power might not be tyrannical or oppressive, though it may restrain itself within the limits of law, and respect the popular passions and interests, still I should not find it the less bad; for it would still annihilate the political existence of individuals. Now, just as the best education is that which developes man's intelligence and multiplies his moral forces, so the best institutions give him the greatest number of civil rights and political powers. The greater number of people that there are in a state, competent to manage and guide their family, their parish, their county, or the state itself, the more political life will there be in that country, and the more the value of each individual will be increased.

Though it might be proved to me that this single central power, whether of a man or of an assembly, a minister or a commission, might execute, better than all the individuals together, the affairs of their parish, their province, or their entire country, I would not be less of the opinion, that it is bad to take from them the care of their private interests, because, in my view, it is of less importance to render their lives physically pleasant and comfortable, than to increase by political interests the domain offered in this world to their soul and understanding. It is not, then, as a final form of government that I recommend centralisation to Ireland.

Just so much as a central government appears to me necessary for this country, would its long continuance seem to me an evil. Extreme centralisation is rather a violent remedy than an institution. It is not a

state, but an accident: it is a weapon potent in combat, which must be laid aside after the battle is over, under pain of being wounded by its edge, or borne down by its weight. It is a stage through which every nation must pass that is obliged, before erecting a new social edifice, to clear away the ruins of the old; and from which they must hasten to depart the instant that the work of transition is completed. Unfortunately it is not always easy to dismiss this auxiliary when its aid is no longer required; and society may find the seeds of destruction in the very cause by which it was saved. There is the danger. This danger is so great, that a people should not incur it, unless it were about to be exposed to a greater danger. There is a choice to make between the chance of not being able to destroy a bad government without the aid of centralisation, and the risk of not being able, after the destruction is accomplished, to get rid of the instrument by which it was effected. But it is because the overthrowing of the aristocracy is in Ireland the first and most urgent, that it is necessary to employ the most powerful though the most perilous instrument.

It accords neither with my wishes nor my purpose to explain the form and mechanism of the centralisation that would suit Ireland; I limit myself to recognising, as a principle, its transitory utility to that country. I will, however, venture to suggest one single practical idea. In order to organise a powerful central government in Ireland, it would be necessary to draw closer the bonds that unite Ireland to England, to bring Dublin as close as possible to London,

and to make Ireland an English county. Everything at the present day tends to make this an object of easy execution; we are no longer at the period when a voyage of weeks or even months separated Ireland from England.

Once, in the reign of Henry VIII., the Irish parliament, long deprived of all news from England, on the arrival of a long-delayed courier passed an act recognising the king's marriage with Anna Boleyn; and on the following day, having received a second and a speedier courier, solemnly voted the nullity of the marriage.[1] If an Irish parliament existed in our day, and if a tyrant asked from it a similar act of baseness, it would not run the same risk of displeasing its master by its very servility.

Thanks to the improvement of navigation and the roads, London is now within twenty-one hours of Dublin. Ireland is nearer the English parliament than Scotland or Wales. How strange! England is now nearer to the United States of America, though they are six thousand miles distant, than she was to Ireland half a century ago, though Ireland is separated from her only by a narrow strait. These wondrous creations of human science, which are destined to change the social relations, not only of men but of nations, will exercise their first influence on Ireland, for the route between London and Dublin is the first great distance by land and sea which has been greatly diminished by steam. Whence comes it, then, that Ireland continues to retain a government distinct from the English government, a special executive power, peculiar and

local administrations? This distinct government separates Ireland from England, to which it could not be drawn too close. The English who come to Ireland to contend against the aristocracy, are less powerful than if they remained in England. Every administration in Dublin is in one or other of these two predicaments: it either submits to the influence of the aristocracy which it ought to attack; or, if it rejects the aristocracy, it is exposed to attacks which it is less able to resist in Dublin than it would be in London.

We do not dispute that Ireland has need of a special government; and if there be a necessity of governing it on a legislative system different from that of England, special agents are required to apply different rules of administration. But this being granted, we see no reason why the seat of Irish government should not be fixed in the first city of the British empire.

There are those who consider the vice-regal court of Dublin as necessary to temper the violence of parties, and keep them separate when it cannot extinguish them. But has this opinion any foundation?

The only way in which a court can be brilliant is, by calling around it the aristocracy of the country. Now this aristocracy, exclusive by its nature, being in possession of the ground, will not suffer the inferior classes to mingle in its ranks; and besides, of what fusion or what harmony can this court be the source? Suppose that the head of the court in Dublin has received orders to combat the Irish aristocracy, how can he invite its members to his parties, or how avoid the in-

vitation? If he asks for their company, he deceives them—if he passes them over, he insults them. And even should he attempt to attract them, this aristocracy, mortally wounded in its pride, will hold itself apart, will affect to despise a court which it will call mercantile and vulgar, and will refuse to join in pleasures, of which, however, it will not hear the fame without regret. In fact, a court at Dublin would create parties, if they were not already in existence.

The reform of the viceroyalty, and the abolition of the local administrations of Ireland are, doubtless, mere changes of form. But they are practical means, indispensable for the execution of the political reforms of which the country is in want. It is absolutely necessary, that during the period of transition in which Ireland is placed, those who govern the country should be completely severed from it, from its habits, and its passions. The government must wholly cease to be Irish; it must be, if not entirely English, at least entrusted to Englishmen.

## SECT. II.—*What must be done to abolish the civil privileges of the aristocracy in Ireland—Necessity of rendering the people landed proprietors.*

It would be of little value to attack the Irish aristocracy in its political privileges only; it is its social power that must especially be assailed. Whatever revolution is effected in a country, society remains nearly the same, if its civil laws are not modified at

the same time as its political institutions. Political laws change with the passions and fortunes of the parties that succeed to power. The civil laws, in which a multitude of interests are engaged, do not change. Consider the two greatest revolutions that have convulsed the world in modern ages, that of 1649 in England, and of 1789 in France. Popular clamours were equally loud in both countries; the same enthusiasm of reformers, the same passion of levelling; in the political order, every thing was overthrown, broken, and trampled under foot; here and there the existing world was demolished, to raise on its ruins a new world, an ideal world, where justice, reason, and truth would be the only sovereigns; both countries went nearly the same length astray, the one with its philosophy, the other with its religion; they seemed mutually to copy each other in excesses, illusions, and miseries; each sacrificed its holocaust of royal blood; each had its anarchy and its despotism; the one its Napoleon, the other its Cromwell; each returned to its ancient dynasty, England to the Stuarts, France to the Bourbons; the similitude seems perfect between the two epochs and the two nations, except that in France there was more glory and in England less blood. How then comes it to pass, that from the very outset, the first completely changed its appearance, whilst the second retained its likeness to itself?

Scarcely had Charles II. resumed the crown, when English society returned to its accustomed channels; nothing farther remained of the revolution; twelve years of reforms, acts of violence, despotic interfer-

ence of the state, passed away like a tempest, the traces of which are effaced by a calm. In France, on the contrary, in spite of the political form that attempted to reproduce the ancient state of society, quite a new people is revealed to our view; no matter whether it be called republic, empire, or royalty, the monarchical France of 1789 has become democratic, and will never cease to be so.

Why is there so great a difference in the effects, when the causes appear so similar? Because in England, at the very height of political destruction, the reformers did not touch the civil laws. They abolished royalty, and left the right of primogeniture untouched; whilst in France the changes were made in civil and political order at the same time. Social reform even preceded the great revolutionary crisis; the laws that abolished feudal services, which substituted equality of inheritance for privilege, had been all enacted when the republic came into existence. These laws attacked the very heart of the old social system, that which is most immovable amongst a people, land, and family. The republic passed away, but the civil laws remained. They had at once reached the foundation, whilst the other had only run lightly over the country, not indeed like the breeze that passes away, but like the scythe, which, though it mows down, only affects the surface. It would then be an idle enterprise to deprive the Irish aristocracy of its political authority, if at the same time its civil privileges, which are the soul of its power, were not taken away. There are, in Ireland, social wounds which it is more important to

cure than political evils. What is essential is the establishment of harmony, not only between the governing power and its subjects, but between the labouring and the wealthy classes. What must first be checked is the war waged against society by the peasant, whose profound misery merits so much pity, and whose passions menace so many dangers. There is a bad democracy, it is that which is hostile to the fortunes created by industry; but there exists also a good democracy, it is that which combats the fortunes maintained by privilege alone.

Now it is these laws of privilege, such as entails and the right of primogeniture, which both in England and Ireland concentrate the possession of all territorial wealth in the hands of the aristocracy. The monopoly established by these laws is doubly pernicious, by the evil it inflicts and the good it prevents; it chains down the land in indolent and selfish hands, to which it only lends a pernicious force, and it prevents the land from falling into the possession of those who, by improving it, would enrich themselves and benefit the entire community. It does not always save stupid or foolish landlords from ruin, and it forms an insurmountable obstacle to the acquisition of landed estates by the people. And yet can any one see Ireland and its immense agricultural population, without recognising that the true remedy for the misery of the people would be to render them proprietors instead of tenants?

England demonstrates better than any other country, how with a good aristocracy the agricultural popu-

lation may be prosperous without ever acquiring property in the soil; whilst Ireland proves that there are countries where the people are absolutely miserable in the condition of tenants.

It is difficult to imagine a country in which property is worse distributed than Ireland. In England, large farms established on vast estates employ only a few cultivators, but these few live comfortably. In France, where property is infinitely divided, the agricultural labourer is for the most part the proprietor; and his farms, when he has any, are sufficiently large to render his condition far from deplorable. In Ireland, properties are as large as in England, and farms as much divided as properties in France; in other words, the country has all the abuses of large properties without any of the compensating advantages; with all the inconveniences of small farms, a system of which it possesses nothing but the vices.

English economists frequently quote the example of poor Ireland, to prove the great injury of the extreme division of land in France. Yet such a comparison can only be a source of error, for there is only an apparent similitude in the agrarian distribution of the two countries. The land in both is, I grant, equally loaded with agriculturists; but there the analogy begins and ends; since in France the petty agriculturists are owners of the parcels of land which they occupy, whilst in Ireland they are only tenants.

When people see the peasants of Ireland sunk in wretchedness on the miserable "lots of land" which they cultivate, they conclude that in France the same

misery must be the lot of the person who occupies an equally small fraction of ground: no conclusion, however, can be less logical. It is for himself and for his own profit alone that the French agriculturist waters with the sweat of his brow the ground whose harvest is assured to him; whilst the Irish peasant sows for another, reaps a crop of which he never tastes, and has for the most part exhausted the soil, when he has raised from it the rent that he is bound to pay his landlord. Who does not see that the same spot of ground which amply supplies the wants of the one, must necessarily be insufficient to the other? Who does not comprehend that on his small farm one may be free and happy, for the same reasons that will render the other dependent and miserable?

It is a common objection against the division of land, that as the partition never ceases, estates will be cut up into such small fractions, that each parcel will only be a barren boon to its possessor, and a general source of impoverishment to a society composed of such proprietors; but are not such fears exaggerated or chimerical? Do we not see the partition of land in France halt at the point where it ceases to be useful; more restrained where land bears a less price, more developed where a less extent represents an equal value?[1] When a proprietor has no interest in preserving land too limited for his purposes he sometimes sells it, and sometimes farms it out to a neighbouring proprietor; most frequently he cultivates it himself, and in such case, however small it may be, he finds it his interest to keep it; but as the

care of his farm does not occupy him the whole year, no more than its profits would afford him sufficient support, he joins some other branch of industry to his agricultural labours. Most of these French petty proprietors work for others; some as day-labourers,- others as vine-dressers; some as small shopkeepers in the village, others as mechanics. But it may be asked, does not the land thus broken, divided, and delivered over to feeble resources for its cultivation, lose its value and fertility?

I will not here discuss the great controversy about small and large farms. I know it has been maintained that a large farm produces more proportionally, than several small farms of the same extent; because the large proprietor has the command of capital and processes which are not within the reach of the small proprietors; but I am not sure whether it might not be answered, that the petty occupants, in the absence of monied capital, expend on the parcels of which they are the proprietors an amount of activity and personal energy which could not be obtained from a hired labourer; that all labouring thus for themselves, and under the influence of a fruitful selfishness, may, by the force of zeal and industry, succeed in obtaining from the lands as much, if not more, than a single proprietor, compelled to hire the labour of others, could procure: that this employment of the greater force to produce the same result, is not to be regretted in a country where, if the people did not turn to the land, they would not engage in any other branch of industry;

finally, that these petty cultivators, obliged to superior efforts in order to obtain an equal end, need not be pitied, because they find in the interest and passion of property an inexhaustible source of vigour, which renders their heavy burthen lighter. The experience of modern times has shown what a difference in value there is between the work of the free labourer and the slave; but we do not yet know how much the labour of the cultivating proprietor is better than that of the hired labourer.

However this matter may be, leaving the examination of this question to the economists, I limit myself to the assertion, that if the economical advantages of the division of land are doubtful, its social and political benefits are far from uncertain.

Ask all those in France, who have known anything of the condition of the people before 1789, and they will tell you that it is now infinitely more prosperous than it was formerly: and what has been the chief cause of this sudden change? simply, that the people have become proprietors. But we have no need of the traditions of the last century, to convince us of this truth. Let us only look at what is passing before our eyes: which of us is not struck by the revolution suddenly wrought in the entire existence of any one of the people who was not a proprietor, and has become so? Land is in France the supreme ambition of the working classes. The domestic servant, the day-labourer, the operative in the factory, labours only to purchase a small piece of ground; and he who attains the object so eagerly

desired, not only becomes physically more comfortable, but morally a better man. At the same time that he wears better clothes, and uses more wholesome food, he conceives a higher idea of himself; he feels that henceforth he counts for somebody in his country; whilst wandering about from district to district, and from town to town, he was little interested in living honourably, and incurred few perils by an immoral course of life. Here nothing was known of the regular life he had previously led elsewhere; there, people were ignorant of the dishonesty that disgraced him in another place. But now that he is attached to the soil, he knows that everything will be taken into account; from this moment he keeps a watch over himself, for he will suffer all his life for an evil action, as he is sure always to derive advantage from his good deeds. He is thus more moral, because he is more independent. In general he takes a wife at the same time that he purchases his land; and soon, in the bosom of the domestic affections, he learns order, economy, and foresight: he is better both as a man and a citizen; his country is to him something tangible; is not his country the land? Henceforth he has a place on its bosom. In vain would economists prove to me that by the division of land less produce is obtained from the ground at greater expense; I would reply, that I know no means of covering the surface of the country with inhabitants more prosperous, more independent, more attached to their native land, and more interested in its defence.

If the acquisition of property in the soil has been such an advantage to France, with what great blessings would it be fraught to the poor people of Ireland! By becoming proprietors, the French have passed from an endurable condition to a much better state; the people of Ireland would clear at one bound the space which separates a prosperous lot from the most wretched condition imaginable.

The more we consider Ireland, its wants and its difficulties of every kind, the more we are convinced that such a change in the condition of its agricultural population would be a remedy for all the evils of the country. So long as the Irishman will be merely a tenant, you will find him always indolent and wretched. What energy can you expect from the agriculturist who knows that, if he improves his farm, his rent will be augmented?—that if he could augment its produce one hundred fold, his share would not be one whit greater? who takes his farm at so high a rent that even in the most prosperous year he cannot clear off arrears; who always sees "the hanging gale" suspended over his head, as a menace, the obvious purport of which is, that if at the next harvest he should collect a few more sheaves than was expected, the profit shall not belong to him! Suppose him, on the contrary, the proprietor of the two or three acres which he now rents; with what ardour will he till the soil which will recompense all his pains? Of what efforts will he not be capable, when he will see a reward attached to every toil, an advancement at the end of every furrow?

It may be fairly presumed that whenever Ireland shall have small proprietors, the greater part of the miseries of the country will cease. The fatal competition for small farms, which is not less injurious to the landlord than to the tenant, would soon disappear; for wherever the people possess a mere sufficiency of sustenance from their own ground, they will not farm the land of others, except on advantageous terms. The rich, ceasing to have the monopoly of the land, will no longer incur the curses of the poor; and besides, the petty occupant who covers with his body his field and his cabin, will have nothing to fear from the attacks of which land is the object in Ireland.

England is now making great efforts to raise Ireland from her frightful state of misery; all theories are invoked, all superior intelligences set to work, all means are tried, from the charity which gives bread to the poor, to the emigration which exiles him from the country. All these violent or factitious means must be ineffectual. Let people coolly reflect, and they will see that the land on which the poor live now so miserably, can alone render their condition better. It is in vain to attempt saving Ireland, by introducing manufactures: Ireland is essentially agricultural, and she is so, precisely because England is essentially manufacturing. The people must find a prosperous condition in the land, or resign itself to be eternally miserable: since the Irish peasants are profoundly wretched as tenants, is not their only remaining chance to become proprietors?

I could support my opinion by a thousand other arguments, but I forbear. If an English reader deems my reasons insufficient, I beg of him to consider that every one but an Englishman will find them superabundant.

But if it be true, that the Irish nation is doomed to languish in frightful distress so long as it will be excluded from property in the soil, how is this right of property to be attained?

Grave and distinguished publicists have given a solution of this difficulty which I cannot accept: admitting the necessity of the principle that I have established, they propose that the tenants now in possession should be simply and plainly declared proprietors.[2] This is not a question for discussion, but clearly a revolution. I have already given my sentiments on the nature of the proceedings by which social or political reforms are effected. In my opinion, to be good they must have one primary condition; that is, they must be conformable to justice and morality. Now, though it is less cruel to deprive a landlord of his property than of his life, the spoliation is quite as unjust as the murder, and therefore equally odious. It is very gratuitously supposed, that this agrarian revolution would be legitimised by a British act of parliament. But, in the first place, the dispossession of the rich for the profit of the poor would not be one whit more equitable because it was executed in the name of the law. Vainly would they allege that the actual possessors of the Irish soil having been usurpers, it is just to resume it.[3] What

present existing right would stand against an examination of the past? And which set of proprietors would be declared usurpers? Would they be merely the descendants of the companions of William III.? But then, only a small portion of the land would be resumed? Would they add to these the lands of Cromwell's soldiers and adventurers? But why not then go back to the settlers in the time of James I., or even of Elizabeth?

Since the sixteenth century, property in Ireland has changed hands a thousand times, not merely from the shock of revolutions, but by sales and transfers. Are all possessors to be shipped off their estates, by whatever title they hold them? even those who have purchased them with their money, under the protection of the laws? But then, Ireland must be thrown into frightful confusion, and the evil will strike without distinction the old proprietors and the new purchasers, the Catholic and the Protestant; the person who has purchased an estate from the fruits of his industry, as well as the person who inherits it from his ancestors; the merchant who has advanced money on mortgage, as well as the proprietor himself. Besides, though we may understand how, by such a system, the poor will cease to be indigent, we do not see what is to become of the rich, who, doubtless, will not remain cool and passive spectators of their own ruin, and who, if they do not kindle the flame of civil war in their country, will doubtless abandon it, so that all the proprietors having disappeared, there will only remain in Ireland rude peasants turned into masters. A singular means

of advancing the civilisation of Ireland; of restoring peace to a country distracted by six centuries of civil discord, and of restoring the feelings of right and rectitude to a land where they have been lost!

For my part, it seems to me so important not to trouble the public conscience by any violation of rights, and not to agitate society by interference with property, that I equally reject the system of those who would wish to distribute the three millions of waste land in Ireland amongst the poor peasantry. In order to bestow such a gift, the lands must first be taken from their present proprietors. Now, in my view, every attempt on property is a bad measure of political economy.

Cannot the proposed end be attained by mild, equitable, and legal measures?—an end which would cease to be desirable, if it could only be reached by injustice and wrong.

What is it that is wanting to the lower orders in Ireland? To acquire property in the soil; but not to obtain it by iniquitious force: we must not make, but aid them to become, proprietors; and to attain this end, they must be supplied with the means. Now it is the means that is absolutely wanting at present. The Irishman finds it absolutely impossible to acquire property in the soil, not only because he is poor, but because, in both countries, civil laws made for the advantage of the aristocracy tend constantly to the concentration of the land in the smallest number of hands—because, in one word, these laws prevent land from being a marketable commodity. The inacces-

sibility of the land is the great obstacle to overcome; it is the most important of all aristocratic privileges to destroy; and its magnitude is so great, that I shall make it the subject of special examination in the next chapter.

## Subsection I.

### *Feudal state of Landed Property in England.*

In order to comprehend the condition of landed property in Ireland, I must explain its state in England. In the latter country, land is still feudal. The hand of the cultivator has long been free; but he has not broken his old chains; and whilst all around him is agitated, changed, and modified, he alone is unchanged, an unalterable fragment detached from a state of society mutilated by time and by revolutions.

In spite of all the victories gained every day by the new principles of society over the old, the labour that creates over the privilege that preserves, eternal progress over eternal immobility, land is what it was seven centuries ago—the feudal base of a social system no longer in existence, a living emblem of an extinct world.

The art by which the English aristocracy has preserved its civil privileges entire, whilst it surrendered its political privileges, is a fact worthy of observation. The spirit by which it is animated is nowhere shown more clearly than in everything relating to land. As-

suredly it would be easier to extort universal suffrage from the English parliament than a change in the law of inheritance. The English aristocracy has only preserved the portion of the feudal system favourable to it as a body; it has abolished all that was inimical to its pretensions.

In truth, the sovereign is, by the present law, presumed to be the sole proprietor of the soil, of which the actual occupants are only proprietors in the second degree. But this is a legal fiction totally destitute of reality. The *suzeraineté* is purely nominal; and the inheritor of an estate in England enjoys as absolute a right of property as that which is defined by the French law. The royal privileges in this matter have been all abolished; the laws which secured the privileges of the aristocracy have alone remained in force.

The principal object of these laws, extorted from feeble princes by powerful barons, was to preserve the vassal in full possession of his fief. What means were taken to attain this end? They tended to render lands unalienable and fixed in the hands of the possessors by the system of entails. They opposed the division of land among all the children, by the law of primogeniture. And now a fief purchased by a retired merchant may be protected, if he pleases, by the same laws which gave power to a vassal in the time of Edward I. The spirit of the feudal law has disappeared, but its consequences have remained. It, however, appears to me that very few in England think about these anomalies.

## Subsection II.

### *Feudal condition of landed property in Ireland—Necessity of a change.*

The law relating to estates is the same in Ireland as in England. Thus, the same causes which tend to the conservation and indivisibility of the soil in the former country, exercises the same influence in Ireland.

The obscurity respecting the titles of property is not, however, so great as in England. In the reign of Queen Anne (A. D. 1708) a system of public registration for all deeds relating to land was established in Dublin, and since that time every deed of sale or mortgage is regularly registered. The principle of the institution was doubtless good, but, whether through original defects of form or subsequent abuse, the benefit is of little value. The expense of searching the registries is very considerable, and can only be borne by the rich.

Besides, this examination does not dispense with the necessity of consulting a lawyer, who possesses the same monopoly in Ireland as in England, and the same mystic authority in contracts. Though land in Ireland is not covered with so thick a veil as in England, it is, perhaps, loaded with more complications, embarrassments, and encumbrances. Independent of

the feudal bonds that fetter it as in England, it has chains peculiar to itself.

In the first place, a great number of titles in Ireland are vitiated by defects belonging to the time when, according to law, the Catholics of Ireland could neither be proprietors nor tenants on long leases. As it sometimes happened that Catholics had money wherewith to purchase, and Protestants land to sell, a disposition to elude the law arose on both sides, and the land afforded an opportunity for a thousand clandestine transactions, the object of which was to bestow a right of property on those who could not legally possess it.

Every estate in Ireland, small or great, is, besides, infected with a kind of incurable leprosy. It is covered with an immense population of small tenants, whose burden must be borne by the person who becomes proprietor. And all these tenants do not occupy the ground on the same terms; some have a lease for twenty-one years, others for thirty-one, some for ninety-nine, and others for ever: there are some also who hold their farms not directly from the landlord, but from an intermediate tenant. How can a new purchaser recognise the rights he acquires in the midst of this crowd of occupants, middlemen and tenants, secured by anterior rights, and often mutually pledged to each other?[1] Must he examine successively all the contracts between the occupants and the middlemen, to find which are obligatory on the lord of the soil, and which illegal? How can he purchase an estate entailing such investigations? And if he omits them, how can he purchase without any security?

But if it be true, that there are more physical obstacles to the transfer of land in Ireland than in England, we must at the same time confess that its indivisibility is not protected in the first country by the same moral and political laws that come to its aid in the second.

We have seen that there is in England a population which, so far from envying the land, has no desire to possess it, but rather regards it as a weighty charge imposed upon the wealthy. It is a superfluity of luxury and opulence; and in this country, where so many different roads are open to human exertion, it is not easy to see what interest the lower ranks would have in becoming proprietors; it is certain that they do not aspire to be so.

In Ireland, on the contrary, land, instead of being a luxury, is a necessity. It is the only good to which everybody aspires, it is the subject of all engagements; it is the passion which rouses every soul; it is the interest which stimulates every intelligence. Land in Ireland is the common refuge; it is not enough to say, that land is desired in Ireland; it is envied and coveted; it is torn to pieces, and the fragments are fiercely contested: when it cannot be occupied by fair means, it is seized by crime. I need not inquire if the Irish people are anxious to become proprietors of land, when I see them risk their own lives, and take those of others, to become tenants of half an acre of ground: though the peasant could not explain his passion, it would not the less exist; property is so far

from him, that it appears to his mind as a chimera for which it would be folly to hope, and if he does not aim at its acquisition, it is not because he disdains it, but because he deems the price too high.

Feudal property in Ireland, besides, is not fenced by the popular sympathy which in England protects its indivisibility. Confiscated three or four times over, land in Ireland is associated only with recollections of violence, persecution, and blood. In some hands, it is the solemn testimony of an usurpation which does not go farther back than a century, and those who possess it in general excite nothing but hatred.

It must also be observed, that the economic advantages asserted to result from the concentration of land in a few hands in England, can in no way follow from a similar system applied to Ireland.

England prides itself on an agricultural theory, which, by employing few hands, sends into the factories all those who are not employed in the cultivation of the soil. Who does not see at the first glance that such a system is inapplicable to Ireland? It is not for keeping up large farms, that the indivisibility of the soil is maintained in Ireland; for all the farms are small, and an extensive system of culture is unknown: it is not for the sake of public wealth that a system is maintained by which the most fertile lands continue unproductive, or produce less than half of what is obtained from inferior soils in England.

In a country where there are eight millions of inhabitants, without any other resource than the land,

what can be the advantage of this theory, the object of which is to employ on land the smallest number of labourers possible? If such a system suits a country where hands are wanting for manufactures, would it not be fatal to a people, where all not occupied upon the land are necessarily unemployed?

The English labourer, repulsed from the land, immediately becomes a producer of national wealth in the manufactory. But what will the Irish peasant do when removed from his little cabin? To what branch of industry will he apply himself in a country where no manufactures exist? Do you suppose that the land will produce more, when freed from the superabundant labourers? Perhaps it might, but society will have to take charge of an unemployed labourer whose idleness will be dangerous. The day that the labourer quits the land, what can he become but a mendicant or a Whiteboy?

None of the moral and political reasons which, if they do not justify, at least explain the permanence of feudal land in England, exist in Ireland. In this latter country, to become proprietor is a question of life or death for the people; but, in spite of this necessity, they have the same obstacles to overcome as in England, where the people have neither the desire nor the want of land. The chief obstacles, as I have already stated, are the laws of entail and primogeniture; these are of sufficient importance for us to resume their consideration.

SUBSECTION III.—*Entails in England and Ireland.—Necessity of abolishing them in the latter country.*

The most striking feature in English entails is, that they are left by the legislature to the caprice of individual will; they are weapons placed in the hands of proprietors for the protection of their estates, which they may use or not at their discretion.

There are in England no perpetual entails; that is to say, none, by the mere force of law, annexed to the inheritance, so as to fix its descent by invariable principles which cannot be set aside.

The longest entail terminates at the second degree; that is to say, if the child of the person for whose profit the entail was made, does not renew it, the entail is at an end; he may dispose of the estate, which becomes essentially alienable. Besides, by the present regulations of English jurisprudence, the proprietor of an entailed estate may always, by the aid of certain judicial forms, dock the entail, and acquire a full right of selling the land.

Are we then to conclude, that the aristocratic principle of entail has disappeared from English institutions? It would be a great mistake. The lands of the rich are not, it is true, necessary unalienable, but it depends on his pleasure that they should become and remain such. Does he wish to secure his property by an entail? He has only to speak, and it is done. Does he deem it less advantageous to keep his estates than to sell them? The law, again, comes to

his aid, and renders that alienable which a moment before was not so.

A law, leaving so much in the power of an individual, would be ill suited to a pure monarchy. There, the entails which preserve large properties in certain noble families are established for the benefit of the throne, of which these families are the support. It is not inquired whether it suits the nobility to keep their lands or not; the monarch sees that it is his interest, and that is sufficient. It is different in an aristocracy where the lords of the soil are rich and powerful of themselves.

It would, therefore, be an error to suppose, that the law of entail in England and Ireland has lost its efficacy, because we see it yield to the pleasure of the lords of the soil: its modifications are for their profit. In Ireland, the system, instead of protecting aristocratic fortunes, would have proved their greatest enemy, if the country had not possessed the secret of making entails yield to the will of the proprietors.

We can easily understand the assistance which a wise and enlightened aristocracy might derive from a system of absolute and inflexible entails. Accustomed to regularity, it would be protected in occasional extravagance, by a system which declared its estates inalienable; it would be always sufficiently rich to keep its credit, and if by chance it incurred debts, it would be saved from selling its property to pay them.

But, in place of this enlightened and powerful aristocracy, imagine an aristocracy destitute of prudence, talent, and conduct, degraded in public opinion, im-

poverished as much by its vices as its errors. In a word, put the Irish aristocracy in place of the English aristocracy; then the law framed to perpetuate its wealth will only accelerate its ruin.

Sinking under the weight of its debts, and destitute of all credit,[1] the aristocracy of Ireland can only raise money on mortgage; but who will lend money on an entailed estate? The embarrassment of the landed proprietor is very great, and he often curses the law which was instituted for his protection. He has then recourse to legal proceedings. I need not explain the process of "common recovery;" I need only mention that it is attended with greater facilities in Ireland than in England.

What obstacle is there, then, to the abolition of entails in Ireland? The landlords, it is true, would lose the advantage of being able to render their estates inalienable; but, in their present state of distress, would not the advantage be more than compensated by the credit which would result from the right of sale?

We are not here inquiring into the means of strengthening or enriching an aristocracy, the ruin of which is proved to be necessary; but ought not every process which would annihilate the body without individually injuring its members be the best that could be selected? Now, if entails were abolished, every Irish proprietor would be more completely master of his land; more rich, because he would have more credit. The land, delivered from these fetters, would become free; it would be the first step towards the division of the soil,

SUBSECTION IV.—*Primogeniture in England and Ireland.—Necessity of abolishing it in the latter country.—General summary.*

Land must, doubtless, be rendered alienable, in order that the people should acquire it; it is a necessary condition, for that cannot be purchased which is not an article of commerce. The abolition of entails is the first thing to be done, but it will not be enough. The people cannot become proprietors if the lands to be sold are of great extent, and they will preserve this great extent in a country where primogeniture prevails.

If the English system of legislation respecting inheritance is open to any reproach, it is that of excessive freedom; the owner of an unentailed estate may leave it to whichever of his children he pleases, or he may disinherit his family altogether, and leave the property to an entire stranger. Hence, the English frequently fall into the error of supposing that their law of primogeniture has no force of itself, and that the system is maintained by the habits and inclinations of the country.

Englishmen who employ such language are right to a certain extent. It is very clear, that if the law of primogeniture was contrary to the opinions and habits of the country, it would cease to exist wherever it is not obligatory. Still it has its roots in the law. What is the legal principle?—Simply this: if the father does not make a will, the eldest son inherits all, to the ex-

clusion of his brothers and sisters, who inherit absolutely nothing. Now what is the consequence?—When the father keeps silence, the law speaks, and its voice is always in favour of the eldest son. You may, if you please, say that the law is not tyrannical, since resistance is permitted, but do not say that it is powerless, for if a man dies intestate, it acts with absolute sway. . . . . This right is indisputably the most important privilege of the English aristocracy; we may add, that it is also the most national. The beauty and richness of England, and the conservation of the splendid demesnes along every line of road, depend upon keeping estates together, and hence a sort of popularity is attached to the law of primogeniture, without which those splendid groves and plantations would fall beneath the axe, when the principle of equality divided and broke up inheritances.

Primogeniture is as strong a legal principle in England as in Ireland; but it does not find the same support there in the condition of the land, in the prejudices and the national passions. It is true that in Ireland, as in England, all those who possess large estates have the same aristocratic feelings for the conservation of their property as the English proprietors, and exhibit the same attachment to the principle which prevents their being divided. It is also true, that those who purchase estates with recently acquired wealth, are, as in England, at once seized with the same desire of founding a family and preserving the estate entire.

But, in Ireland, the respect and love for aristocracy

end with those who are, or suppose themselves, members of the body; and this number is very limited. In England, by the side of every old fortune, there are a thousand new ones springing into existence. It is not the same in Ireland, where misery is almost as immovable as the land. Few hope to attain the object, and those who succeed are hated. I have never, in Ireland, heard the people evince for the vast possessions of the aristocracy the same indulgent and even enthusiastic sentiments with which I have been often surprised, in England, from the mouth of a poor man. Primogeniture may consequently be abolished in Ireland without at all offending the national feelings. On the contrary, it would be the best means of reconciling the law with public opinion. If the civil laws of a country are the expression of its habits, may it not be said, that so long as an antinational aristocracy will preserve its privileges, there will be in that country a flagrant opposition between the manners and the laws?

The abolition of primogeniture would not cause the same ruin in Ireland which it might produce in England. There are magnificent demesnes and splendid mansions in Ireland, but they are like oases in the desert. The rich Irish proprietor is accustomed to surround his residence with a certain extent of reserved land, on which he accumulates all his cares, all his luxury, and all his pride. Whilst our view is restricted to this narrow space, we might almost suppose ourselves in England; but when we look beyond, we are struck with the most lamentable spectacle; the

land seems as poor as its inhabitants, and appears to reflect their misery: filthy hovels, unenclosed fields, naked land entirely destitute of trees, present a sad prospect of desolation.

In England the farm is so rich, that it may be confounded with the demesne of the landlord. In Ireland there is a sudden break where the demesne ends; it appears almost incredible that the hideous form which displays so much indigence and misery, should belong to the superb palace containing such enormous opulence.

Now, does any one suppose that there will be matter for much regret, when, by a new system of legislation, these immense estates so shocking to the sight will be divided? Would there be any cause to lament the mutilation of vast inheritances, if, instead of exhibiting barbarous hovels and filthy tenants, they were covered with neat houses and small proprietors? Here, then, we see that it is for the interest of Ireland, it is necessary, to subvert an institution which may be allowed to stand in England.

The abolition of the right of primogeniture in Ireland is absolutely necessary to the objects which must be attained. In the first instance, it would be sufficient to enact, that in case of a father's dying intestate, the property should be equally divided, and thus render an express declaration necessary to enrich the young son at the expense of the elder branches.

Doubtless, for a long time such a law would have little efficacy, because the habits and manners of the rich would struggle against it; but would it not be the

surest and most equitable means to form new habits? In the first place, it would be imperative on every occasion that the father of a family died intestate; and how many are taken by surprise in their last hour! It would also remove from the selfishness of pride the excesses under which it finds shelter. Out of five children four are destitute, and one is rich;—this, at present, is the work of the law. But hereafter they might say to their father, "This revolting inequality in the condition of those who had an equal right to your tenderness is your work: it results not from an omission on your part, but from a positive act of which you are the author."

I cannot believe but that in the long-run such a law would be fruitful in results, and would cause the division of a great number of estates. A glance at France will show with what rapidity such a division takes place, when once the principle of equal partition is admitted. When once primogeniture is abolished, the division of estates would afford the rising middle class in Ireland lands of an extent suited to their means, and, as it continued, would end by rendering landed property accessible to the lower classes themselves.

In fine, to attain the proposed end, the chains which fetter the feudal soil must be broken, entails abolished, the law of gavelkind substituted for that of primogeniture, landed property delivered from its trammels, the uncertainty of title removed, publicity given to all sales and transfers of land; the registry of mortgages and all engagements relative to land freely opened to

the public, security and guarantees given to those who lend money on land; and the form of the deeds of sale must be simplified, so as to render the purchase of small and great estates equally possible.

I do not pretend to point out the legislative means by which the evils I have enumerated may be cured, and I limit myself to saying to those persons on whom the fate of Ireland depends, "Hasten to make laws which will render land a matter of easy traffic; divide and partition the soil as much as you can, for it is the only means, in overthrowing an aristocracy which must fall, of elevating the lower classes; it is the only means of placing the land within the reach of the people, and it is absolutely necessary that the Irish people should become landed proprietors."

## Section III.

### *What must be done to abolish the Religious Privileges of the Aristocracy.*

#### Subsection I.—*Necessity of destroying the supremacy of the Anglican Church.*

Finally, it would not be sufficient to deprive the Irish aristocracy of their social and political privileges, unless they were at the same time stripped of their religious privileges. These are the supremacy and predominance of the worship, which, though followed only by a small minority, is the legal religion of all;

and the great wealth with which that church has been endowed by the state.

How could the aristocracy, after the loss of its social and political privileges, retain its religious supremacy, which was only an accessory to its other privileges? It is with great difficulty that the Anglican church maintains itself while supported by the temporal powers of the aristocracy,—what would become of it when these are removed? Doubtless, in the midst of the ruins of the old edifice this church would not be preserved; for it is so great a scourge to Ireland, that were all the other privileges of the aristocracy spared, its destruction would be necessary; how then is it to be preserved if they fall?

In the midst of the vicious elements in Irish society, the supremacy of the Anglican church stands out in more prominent and revolting relief than the rest, not only because it is the most pernicious, but also because it is the most absurd. The obstinacy displayed in maintaining the legal principle and official existence of a Protestant church in Catholic Ireland proves that there are in human institutions degrees of selfishness and folly, to which it is impossible to assign limits.

We can understand the Anglican church in Ireland only at the moment of its birth; the religious zeal of the period explains it. In the sixteenth century, every sect believed that it exclusively possessed the absolute truth, and regarded it as a sacred duty to impose its creed, even by force, on those who were so unhappy as to have a different faith. The spirit of proselytism then reigned over all parties, and the

Anglicans, who possessed the temporal power, would have shown at this period wondrous moderation if they had limited themselves, as at present, to placing before the Catholics of Ireland what they called the *model church, the type of the true faith ;* and whilst offering to them *this only form of true devotion*, they had not forbidden every other mode of worshipping the Divinity.

It may further be conceived, that if such a religious passion existed in our days, it might have become obstinate in an enterprise, the inutility of which has been demonstrated by three centuries of fruitless efforts.

But has not toleration in our days replaced the spirit of proselytism even in England? In spite of its Anglican nature, the English government recognises all creeds; and the most different sects which formerly raved against each other, now live quietly under the protection of the laws. What, then, is the meaning of a church, erected in a country by religious fanaticism, and which, after three centuries of barren persecutions, continues to exist when the fanaticism is destroyed?

We find still, it is true, among some of the religious Protestants of England, Ireland, and Scotland, an enthusiastic zeal and religious ardour, which recal the early times of the Reformation; but we must render the Anglican church of Ireland this justice, that it is totally exempt from such passions, and that, condemned to live in the midst of a Catholic population, it appears quite resigned to its misfortune.[1] The Anglican ministers do not seem much occupied with

the care of making converts; and the best proof that they can give of their perfect toleration is, that they do not even reside amongst those whose conversion they ought to attempt. It is, besides, a common custom with the Anglican ministers of Ireland to reproach the Catholics with their spirit of proselytism. Assuredly this moderation is laudable, and must be highly approved. But if the Anglican ministers are not in Ireland to make proselytes, why are they there at all? Placed in the country to attain an object whose pursuit is abandoned, why do they remain? If not kept by passion, must it not be by interest? And though they have not converted Ireland to their creed, do they not, nevertheless, hold the privileges, lands, and revenues given them, on the condition of effecting this conversion?

What a sad condition for a church which, in order to avoid the reproach of selfishness, must either be intolerant, or perish! If, in spite of the lessons of the past, the Anglican church of Ireland still dreamed of the conversion of this country to Protestantism, it might excite more passion, but it would be less offensive to taste; it would be more irritating, but less absurd. Its first establishment was an act of violence, its present maintenance is sheer nonsense. In its recognised weakness to communicate its creed to those who pay it, it endeavours to render itself inoffensive, and does not see that the more it obtains indulgence, the more it revolts reason.

Since the church has ceased to persecute the Catholics with the penal laws of the eighteenth century,

it manifests singular surprise at the attacks of which it is the object. With what is it to be reproached? Do not its ministers live peaceably on their lands? Are they not found indulgent to their tenants, good neighbours, and good fathers of families? Do they not expend their revenues for the profit of the labouring population? And is it not a great benefit for a country still in a wild state, and where the upper classes are non-resident, to have here and there scattered over its surface a certain number of intellectual men, who, though they do not extend Protestantism, at least spread the germs of civilisation? Such is the language of the church of Ireland and its ardent supporters.[1] Still, if the Anglican ministers, so often absent from their post, never quitted it, they would be powerless to effect the good required of them. Vainly will tithes be converted into rent-charges; the clergy will still be regarded by the people as the ministers of a hostile creed. Their fortune, however moderate, is a burthen to the poor, and a scandal to the Catholic. The violent and direct persecutions of the church have ceased, but the moral oppression which has succeeded them is still a heavy burthen; the mere existence of the church in Ireland, as at present constituted, is a constant tyranny.

So long as the Anglican creed remains the religion of the state in Ireland, the state will be odious to the country, and neither prosperity nor tranquillity will be possible.

Anglican supremacy is the principal and continued source of all the evils of Ireland. To the Irishman it

means confiscation, violence, caprice, cruelty; it is in his eyes the certain sign of injustice, falsehood, and spoliation. So long as the Anglican church shall be the established religion of Ireland, right or wrong, the country cannot be looked upon as free; it must always esteem itself treated as conquered and oppressed, because the bitterest recollections of the country are all mingled with Protestantism, and there is no recollection of Protestantism which is not mingled with tyranny.

This Anglican root of the aristocracy must therefore be extirpated, for, whilst it continues to remain in Ireland, it will throw up poisonous sprouts. Whatever government may be established in Ireland, woe unto it if it manifests any sympathy for the old Anglican privileges!

This principle of religious domination, in which all the grievances of Catholic Ireland are contained and perpetuated, will be, whilst it endures, an inexhaustible source of divisions, animosities, attacks, and resistances; it will render all authority impossible, even the most beneficent, if supported by it. Vainly would a government, however national, aim at establishing itself in Ireland; it would be powerless and weak if it rested on this vicious base. Vainly would internal reforms be effected in the Anglican church, its abuses corrected, its sinecures abolished, the wealth of its clergy diminished; the evil will always be the same, so long as the principle prevails which gives the Anglican worship a predominance over all other creeds; and this evil will always provoke the same resistance;

the same deeds of violence, and the same popular rebellions, will appear again. In what form will the new resistance show itself? What will be the occasion? I cannot tell, but the event is certain.

It is a common error to believe, that a diminution in the revenues of the Anglican church would lessen the religious evil. In the first place, this reduction could not without injustice exceed certain limits. The higher ranks of the clergy are alone opulent in Ireland. The rectors have not, on an average, more than 500*l.* a year. This sum, enormous to those who pay it against their will, is barely sufficient for the ministers who receive it. These are almost all the younger sons of high families, to whom the church is an estate; their fortune, however large it may appear, is far inferior to their condition and their wants; they are married; they have children to educate and establish in the world; they have rich friends, relations, and connexions in the fashionable world; their charges are heavy, and their revenues below their wants. Perhaps, to be impartial and just, we should add, that the Irish clergy has never rigorously insisted on the whole of its claims. Tithe in Ireland is doubtless lighter than in England.[2] In place of a tenth, the Irish parsons frequently receive only a twentieth; and this is not the mere result of the law; it has always been the case in Ireland, either from the moderation of those who claimed, or the resistance of those who paid. Nevertheless, the riches of the clergy excite complaints in Ireland, which they do not provoke in England. The high pay of the Irish church is in-

deed a mere pretext, and not the real cause of complaint.

Those who believe that reforms in the recognised vices of the church of Ireland would render it a beneficent institution, have only to cast a glance at the past. The hatred which this church excited, having in 1824 attracted the notice of the English parliament, it was imagined that the hatred of the institution arose from the mode in which tithes were levied, and that every grievance would be removed when the vicious form was corrected. The Tithe Composition Act was then passed, by which tithes were commuted for a fixed sum. Still, after this law was enacted and put into execution, tithes and the church were attacked as before.

It was then pretended that the hatred of the Irish to the Anglican church could only be attributed to the political incapacities with which the dissidents from its worship were punished, and that when Catholic emancipation was granted, the enmities of Irishmen would be at an end. Still, after the emancipation measure of 1829, was the Irish church less hated and attacked? In 1830, resistance to tithe commenced; in 1831, all Ireland was in open revolt against the rights of the church. Then it was supposed that these agrarian aggressions had their source in some forgotten grievances.

"Tithe is odious," it was said, "on account of the personal relations it produces between the Catholic payer and the Protestant minister; it was not enough to authorise commutation, it must be rendered

obligatory." A new law was consequently passed,[3] which, instead of permitting commutation, rendered it necessary. This reform was doubtless a step in advance; and assuredly, if the institution, which was its object, had not been radically vicious, the benefit of the change would have been felt and received with gratitude.

Still this law, designed to stifle, served only to irritate passions; the change was made in 1832, and during that very year Ireland was in open insurrection against tithes.

But misapprehension still prevailed; it was said that the insurrection was not directed against the institution, but against some abuse still undiscovered. An abuse in the church was sought; it was easily found; and in 1833 it was supposed that the clamour against the church would be quieted by the abolition of the most vexatious of its imposts, church-rates and vestry-cess; and that all attacks would be at an end when they reduced the number of Protestant bishops, diminished their revenues, and provided for the better administration of ecclesiastical property. This law, however, passed without the designed effect; resistance to tithe has continued; the church still excites the same passions, and is exposed to the same attacks.

Finally, after five years of anarchy and confusion, Ireland, say they, "is about to regain peace and order; tithes themselves will be reduced, the burthen will be transferred from the poor to the rich. This great innovation has been made; we are its witnesses. But are not those greatly deceived who expect con-

siderable effects from this reform? The new Tithe Act reduces the tithes twenty-five per cent., and changes them into a rent-charge, which in future will be paid by the landlords, and not as heretofore by the petty farmers.

The intention of this law is generous; but people will be deceived who suppose, from the date of its passing, tithes in Ireland will cease to weigh upon the poor population, and to excite popular resistance. The situation and feelings of Irish landlords are sufficiently well known, to judge of the impatience with which they have received the burthen imposed upon them. How will these rich, already so poor, pay the new debt? Many will hardly have the power, the greater part will not have the inclination. In the first place, we may fairly reckon on all, or nearly all, endeavouring to throw the charge upon the people, and for this they will have the simple means of raising the rent in proportion to the new charge; thus they will indirectly obtain from the people what could not be raised directly. But what will be the consequence? The hatred of the tenant to his landlord will be increased, and the landlord will vainly attempt to throw upon the church the odium of an exaction from which alone it is the gainer; the unfortunate peasant, who toils from morning until night, will only understand that, before, he paid a sum to a church which he hated, and he now pays a landlord whom he scarcely hates less.

Every one must foresee the repugnance to tithes that must be produced even amongst the Protestant

landlords in a charge which will not only add to their pecuniary embarrassment, but expose them to fresh popular resentments. But not only Protestant landlords, Catholic landlords also will be called upon to pay tithes. Is it to be supposed that these landlords, whose number is rapidly on the increase in Ireland, will be better disposed to pay tithes than their tenants? Will not their consciences as forcibly reject the tribute paid to a hostile creed? Does not their reason suggest the same objections? Does the rich feel less forcibly than the poor Catholic the wrong of being forced to pay a Protestant church? The same resistance will manifestly continue. The only difference will be in the modes of procedure. The resistance of the rich will be more skilful and enlightened; it will have chances for succeeding without violence, which it had not when allied to the lower classes. But if recourse to open force shall be necessary, it will still be more powerful, because better directed; it will rest on people interested in rejecting a burthen which in the end always falls on the labouring classes. There are, besides, in Ireland popular masses, suffering and irritated, which will not long be wanting to the support of violent parties.

But why should we speculate upon the future? Does not the present convey sufficient instruction? Months have elapsed since this expedient for the tranquillisation of Ireland became law, and we already see tithes, under their new name, excite the same resentment and the same fury amongst the people. Whence arises this inutility of all the efforts that have

been made to reform the Anglican church in Ireland? It is simply because Ireland requires not the reform of the Anglican church, but its abolition. The radical vice of this church is, that it has been appointed the legal and official religion of a people which has a different religion. The abuse is the very fact of its establishment; its creation, in the midst of a Catholic people, is an outrage perpetuated so long as it endures. The great wrong of the church of Ireland is, that it is placed in the midst of a Catholic population which rejects it without examination. Its riches, its luxury, its idleness, are assuredly great defects; but the most enormous of all its vices is its existence. Its destruction must be the first step in Ireland towards good order and common sense.

When we speak of abolishing the Anglican church, our meaning is, not that the episcopal form of worship should be annihilated, but simply that it should be deprived of its supremacy over all other forms.

In abolishing the supremacy of the Anglican church, care should be taken that the domination of the Catholic hierarchy should not be established in its stead. Equality of creeds is what is necessary for Ireland. The popular masses in Ireland are indeed Catholic, as they are Anglican in England, and Presbyterian in Scotland; and it would be strictly logical that Ireland should have a Catholic establishment, as England has an Anglican, and Scotland a Presbyterian. But, in the first place, the expediency of connecting church and state is a great problem. How are the frail and fleeting institutions of man to be

associated with the eternal institution of God? Besides, what would be the result of making Catholicity the established religion of Ireland, save to destroy the religious privileges of the Protestants, and transfer them to the Catholics? After having abolished the injurious supremacy of the Anglican church, which offends the majority of the people of Ireland, might we not see the Protestant faith oppressed by the creed over which it formerly tyrannised? One of the greatest perils to which Catholic Ireland is exposed is, that, after having been domineered over, it should attempt to exercise domination. It would be a fatal source of peril for England and for itself;—for England, which could not endure such a domination of a sect, which would revive all the old passions of the Reformation, and the ancient horrors of Popery; and for Ireland herself, which would be again crushed by England.

It is important, then, to both countries that Ireland should accustom herself to religious liberty. Now what better means can be devised to teach lessons of mutual tolerance than to place all religions on the same level? And it is precisely at the present moment, whilst England protects Ireland, that she ought to give the Catholics of the country a lesson of this kind. Equality of religion should come to the Irish as a benefit; at a later period, they will perhaps consider it an evil; and this will assuredly be the case, if equality is delayed until the Catholics become masters of political society; they will then believe that

equality is introduced for the purpose of lowering their creed.

## Subsection I.

### *Means of establishing equality of Creeds in Ireland.— Expediency of paying the Catholic Clergy.*

An English statesman has said, that there are two ways of putting creeds on the same level, paying the clergy of all, or of none.[1] The system by which every religious community is left to provide for its own forms of worship, and its own ministers, is, assuredly, the most equitable of all; since nobody in this order of ideas is called to pay for another's religion, and bestows on his own only just what he pleases. Still there is equity, and perhaps more wisdom in the system which charges the state with providing equally for the expenses of all forms of worship, without giving pre-eminence to any. And if there were any doubt on this important question, it would be removed by the special condition of the Catholic clergy in Ireland.

I can well understand a system by which the members of each community sustain their church themselves, and contribute freely to defray the expenses of public worship; I can conceive such a system in a country, which, like the United States for instance, contains a multitude of different sects, none of which possess considerable power in the state. But who

does not see, at a glance, all the perils that such a system offers to Ireland? where there are only two communions in presence of each other; where the Catholic church alone contains seven millions of souls; where the clergy of that church is the first power in the country; where the clergy is in intimate dependence upon the people, and the people upon the clergy; and where both clergy and people, political enemies of the government, increase their mutual force by a close alliance against it.

There is, doubtless, an excess in the popular power of the Catholic priesthood in Ireland, which seems to require that it should be moderated; a salary given by the state to all members of this priesthood would have such a moderating influence. This salary being proportioned to that given to the Anglican and Presbyterian ministers, would attest the political equality of creeds. The Irish clergy attached to the Irish people by the sympathy of a common creed, would not at the same time be emancipated from all connexion with public authority. Receiving a fixed income from the state, the priests would ask nothing from the poor and miserable people; it would be less popular, but more independent; less free, perhaps, in its relations to power, but less fettered by the passions of party. What could be the obstacle to this measure? Would it be, that a Protestant government cannot pay a Catholic church, or that a Catholic church could not consent to receive a salary from a Protestant state? These objections would have weight, if the state, by paying the Catholic clergy, re-

cognised their religion as that of the country; or if the Catholic priests, by accepting a salary, were bound to recognise the supremacy of a Protestant state. After the legislative union, Mr. Pitt contrived a plan of Catholic emancipation, part of which was the payment of the Catholic clergy by the state; all seemed settled; parliament was contented to give, and the priesthood to receive. Contemporary history proves the assent given by the Catholic bishops to the project of the English premier: the Pope himself had agreed to it. But George III. believed Catholic emancipation contrary to his coronation oath, and before his obstinate will the payment of the Catholic clergy vanished, with the emancipation project of which it was an accessory.[2]

At present, should the plan be resumed, the greatest obstacles would arise, not from the sovereign or the parliament, but from the Catholic priesthood itself. In the beginning of the year 1837, a report was spread that government intended to revive the project; the Catholic bishops of Ireland were roused, and unanimously declared that they would not consent to receive from the state the incomes they derived from the people.[3] Is this declaration to be received as a final resolution? I may be allowed to doubt it. I have already shown that it is not in the nature of the Catholic hierarchy to be hostile to established powers. It cannot be denied, that in several respects the Catholic clergy of Ireland is driven from its ordinary course; its devotion to the people is, indeed, in accordance with its nature, but its hostility to temporal

law is not so.' From what passed in the time of Mr. Pitt we may conclude that an arrangement would have been easy between the government and the Irish priesthood: this transaction, at that time, pleased the greater part of the clergy; it assured them a fixed income, instead of uncertain support; a regular salary, in place of an uncertain revenue, paid in pence and halfpence. It delivered them from popular caprice, without rendering them dependent on power.

But since that time the social existence of the Catholic clergy has changed. The great struggle during twenty years between the government and the people, the solemn and national contests, in which the Catholic clergy has fought and conquered with the people; in which the priest, having become a tribune, has mingled in all the popular movements, become the defender of every violated right, the partisan of every reform; has enjoyed complete success, and drained the intoxicating cup of popularity;—these struggles, I say, have created for the Catholic clergy of Ireland the greatest political existence that any religious body ever possessed; and now that the Catholic clergy has tasted this mode of life, it can enjoy no other.

When the Catholic clergy declared that if government offered salaries it would refuse them, it was not merely to flatter the people, on whom they depend, that they used such language; they, doubtless, expressed their sincere sentiments; they had a consciousness of all they would sacrifice by accepting an income from the state, and they saw that whilst they

gained a fixed and less casual income, they would sacrifice a part of their power and greatness.

Still if the conditions of strict union between the Catholic clergy and people of Ireland cannot be changed, they may be modified. Every circumstance, every event which tends to limit the political sphere of the Catholic priesthood will facilitate their accordance with the government. Let it also be considered, that such a measure should, as far as possible, be executed suddenly and secretly, and not discussed. Until the Irish priests are absolutely taken into pay, they must continue to declare that they take nothing, except from the people on whom they depend at present. As in all affairs where the church is interested, this measure requires to be managed with great tact and prudence, and, like every measure affecting an entire people, it requires resolution. Many other difficulties present themselves: thus, if the English government paid the Catholic bishops, it would require to have at least some indirect control over their nomination; but the mere idea of a *veto* exercised by a Protestant sovereign over the election of a Catholic prelate would seem a monstrous impiety to the Irish priesthood, though the court of Rome, more wise and politic, recognises such transactions.

This is not the place for examining these objections in detail; it is enough to show the object that must be pursued. If I could point it out, others might attain it. What seems certain is, that the body of the Catholic clergy of Ireland is not in its proper

state. Its present condition may serve a country involved in a revolution, but it will not suit other times We must not forget that Ireland is English, and destined to remain such. Catholic Ireland must endeavour to become prosperous under Protestant England: the first condition of this prosperity is, that it should act with wisdom and skill, internally and externally: now, at present, the priests are the most enlightened of the national advisers; but they are kept in absolute dependence on the populace and its blind passions. How can they escape this species of servitude?—I see but one way, by ceasing to be paid by the people. Now, if the people do not pay their salaries, the state must.

### Sect. III.—*Equality of Creeds could not be established in Ireland, if the Anglican Church retained its Tithes and Estates—What should be done with both.*

The equality of creeds that must be established in Ireland could not be maintained, if, after having given a salary to the Catholic clergy, the state left the Anglican church its tithes and its estates. If these were retained, the Irish people would believe that religious predominance was kept likewise. Even if the produce of the tithes and estates did not amount to an equivalent of the salary paid by the state to the ministers of the Catholic church, they would still see privilege instead of equality, because these two sources of re-

venue have been for ages attached to the dominant church, and have been regarded by it as privileges.

We must not forget that in Ireland, above all other countries, any injustice imprinted on the soil is with difficulty effaced. Land is everything to the Irish people: it is the only book which they can read; the Irishman knows no other annals; and so long as he sees the Anglican church in possession of large estates obtained in the times of supremacy, he will regard it as still the dominant creed.

But here a question presents itself—namely, how far can the law, without interfering with the principles of property, deprive the church of its estates?

It is a principle admitted by all publicists, that the property of the church, of a corporation, or mortmain, is not of the same nature as private property, but is governed by very different rules. There are substantial differences between these two forms of property which theory cannot dispute. Every successive possessor of ecclesiastical property has only a life interest; he can neither sell nor bequeath; the property has to him no futurity. It is certain also that, the present being everything to him, it is his interest to derive from the land the greatest revenue possible, even at the risk of exhausting and rendering it barren: in a word, he has all the passions of an irresponsible life-tenant, and none of the sentiments which animate the father of a family. Thus necessarily subjected to selfishness and improvidence, mortmain property is subject to another vice; it has the defect of being inalienable, and removed from the market. Badly ma-

naged, it produces little, and it is chained to the hands that administer it badly.

Now it may be asked, what analogy in principle can there be between private property and that of a corporation,—between the right of a man who, inheriting from his father, transmits to his son, unless he likes to dispose of it otherwise,—and the right of an individual who is put into possession of an ecclesiastical domain because he has been named to an ecclesiastical dignity, an estate which he cannot alienate, for which his heirs have no hope, and which will cease to be his, I do not say on the day of his death, but at any time when, for some cause or other, he might cease to be a minister of the church. Land, consequently, to the religious minister, is merely a means of support, an element of his salary.

Consequently, if the same powers which created such or such an ecclesiastical dignity, suppressed the office, who would assert that such an abolition was an outrage against property? Property ceases when there is no proprietor, or rather when the precarious tenant has disappeared. The real proprietor still remains, that is to say, the nation, the society, the state, which had assigned those lands as a salary for a public duty, and to which, when the office is suppressed, the land naturally reverts. We can see that the office is abolished, but we cannot see that any individual is plundered. And if the legislator has a right to suppress the office, has he not also the power of changing the mode of payment? To support the assertion that it is an act of spoliation to take lands

from the church, it would be necessary to go farther, and assert that any revenue, salary, or estate bestowed on a public establishment, becomes irrevocable property. Now, could such a theory be supported by plausible reasons? Suppose that an establishment, endowed when it was believed salutary, should become pernicious, or that it has ceased to answer the purpose for which it was formed, must society continue to bear the charges imposed to maintain an institution proved to be bad, which charges are only imposed in the hope of great benefits? It is difficult not to see that property, in the hands of ecclesiastical corporations, is *a trust* for which they are accountable to the country, and which may be resumed by the same power by which it was bestowed.

This principle is less disputable in England and Ireland than in any other country, because there the church and state are one, and consequently the property of the church is also the property of the state.

And how can doubt be maintained in presence of what has been done already? In Ireland, tithes were formerly paid to the Catholic church, which is now deprived of these revenues. How? By authority of the king and parliament. On what grounds? On the principle that it belonged to the government to regulate ecclesiastical property, and make the best use of it. Tithes were, consequently, transferred to the Anglican church. For what object? To render Ireland Protestant, which, nevertheless, has continued Catholic.

Are we to conclude that tithes should be restored

to the Catholic church? The consequence does not follow; the state, disposing of its property at its pleasure, may do so, if it deems such a course advantageous; but, thus acting in a country where the notion of sacerdotal supremacy is attached to the payment of tithes, it would place all Ireland under the domination of the Catholic church, and we have seen that nothing could be more ruinous to Ireland itself.

What consequence, then, must we draw? If the state legitimately deprived the Catholic church of its tithes, and transferred them to the Protestant church, in the trust that Ireland would become Protestant, it might, *à fortiori*, after three centuries of expense, recognising the vanity of its efforts and the chimera of its expectations, resume the tithes, and dispose of them anew.

The right which belongs to the state of disposing of the property of the church does not depend on the use that will be made of the property after it is resumed. The right is absolute, and subject to no other conditions than those of morality or utility. If the power of the state to resume the property of the church be disputed, when the interests of the country and religion require it cannot be disputed, we must also confess that it may distribute this property in the way most useful to society. A recent law of the English parliament has recognised all these principles, by taking one-fourth from the revenues of the Irish clergy. The reduction is trifling, but the principle is every thing; for, by adopting it, parliament has declared that the possessions of the church are a national pro-

perty, the disposal of which belongs to the state. If parliament has a right to take from the church the property called *tithes*, it may also resume the property called *land*.

In truth, the greater part of the land possessed by the church of Ireland arose from gifts and bequests. May it not be said that the law cannot, without impiety, defeat the religious purposes of the donor? But see to what this principle will lead. Most of these foundations were made by Catholics for the interests of their church and the establishment of their religion. Still, at the Reformation, the state endowed the Protestant church with all the wealth it took from the Catholic church, and surely it could not perform an act more directly opposed to the will of the donors. Now, one of two consequences must follow; the state had a right to act thus, or it perpetrated injustice. If the latter, the wrong should be repaired, and the confiscated property restored to the Catholics, which I believe would be an evil. If it acted legitimately, it has a right to resume the gift, and dispose of it in another way.

It appears, then, that no considerations of morality or equity would oppose the resumption of ecclesiastical lands and tithes, if their revenues were secured to the actual possessors. It must not be understood that the ower of tithes should be freed from the debt, or the tenant of the church turned into a proprietor; tithes would become a tax due to the state, which would also become proprietor of the lands. It would be bad, in abolishing tithes, to remit the debt; for it is

of evil example to a nation when debtors escape their obligations by a display of force. Landed property in Ireland is loaded with a *grievous* rent—grievous, because it is paid to a detested church. Let us haste to change its nature; let it, like other taxes, be paid to the state. Nothing is more dangerous and depraving to a people than to make money by revolutions. For the same reason, it would be bad to give the church lands to the occupying tenants. These lands belong to the state; if sold for the benefit of the people of Ireland, they would bring an immense profit. Badly cultivated at present, they only bring in one hundred and fifty thousand pounds a year; but it is calculated that they might produce seven hundred and thirty-two thousand pounds. Hence we may judge what a price would be paid in Ireland for these lands. A precious means would be offered to the government of obtaining the desirable object of rendering the people proprietors. There would be six hundred and seventy thousand acres of land to sell, scattered though all the parishes of Ireland; and if a law was made to divide it into small parcels of about ten acres, it would at once create a large number of small landed proprietors. On the day when there will be one hundred and fifty thousand small proprietors in Ireland, property will be more firm, and the security of landlords greater than it ever can be by any political measure.

Thus, the most indispensable of all religious reforms would lead to the most salutary of all social reforms.

# FOURTH PART.

## CHAPTER I.

### WHAT WILL ENGLAND DO?

We have just seen what must be done in Ireland to attack in their first principles the evils which desolate that country, and to restore to its social state, profoundly troubled, the conditions of order, harmony, and tranquillity. Now, is that which is desirable, likely to be accomplished? Will, or can, England effect the immense changes which the interest of Ireland demands? It is not easy to think so. What Ireland requires, is the abolition of its aristocracy, and England is still essentially aristocratic. She loves the institutions which Ireland detests, and is eager to maintain all that is necessary for Ireland to throw down. England, doubtless, is no stranger to the general movement of democracy which agitates the world. The great principle of equality, that fundamental principle of religious and political law, could

not but make its way in a country of light, Christianity, and liberty. Besides, it finds a very powerful auxiliary in the ever-increasing development of English industry, which, incessantly bringing the inhabitants of the country into the towns, unpeoples the places where inequality is best established, and increases the population least subject to aristocratic prejudices. Were we only to look at the surface, and the external aspect of things, we might be led to believe that the old constitution of England is menaced with approaching ruin.

Just survey the progress of democracy in that country since 1830. Parliamentary reform, agitated for more than half a century, suddenly arrested in 1793, and suspended for nearly forty years, suddenly resumes its course, and having become irresistible by the energetic demonstrations of the national will, developes itself, and becomes established on a large basis. From that time England, instead of four hundred thousand electors, reckons more than a million; the House of Commons has ceased to be the creature of the House of Lords, and, supported by the people from which it has emanated, has become the first power of the state.

When these great changes were executed, it seemed as if a new era was beginning for England. Tradition formerly presided over its councils; for the first time it took logic as its guide, and regulated its conduct, not by precedents, but by reason. This intellectual revolution was, perhaps, the most difficult that could be effected in a country attached, like England,

to its old customs. When once it has entered on the rational course, it will traverse it completely, unless checked by some extraordinary circumstances.

It was absurd, they said, that a petty borough, containing only two or three houses, should send members to parliament, whilst towns like Manchester and Birmingham, containing from one to two hundred thousand inhabitants, should have no representatives. Doubtless. In consequence, the borough was deprived of its privilege, and rights were given to the large towns which they had not before.

It is absurd that the citizens, who pay the taxes, should not all be invited to elect the representatives who have the power of voting those taxes; and, in consequence of this just reasoning, an immense extension was given to the elective franchise. Very well; but is it not absurd, that the municipal towns should be represented by those whom they have not elected, and be governed by officers whom they have not instituted?—Assuredly; in consequence, the municipal corporations of England were reformed and re-organized on a rational plan of free government.

The same logical method assails all abuses, and does not confine itself to the political world; it embraces the entire circle of humanity: the penalty of death has been abolished in a multitude of cases as useless and barbarous: and because slavery is unjust the emancipation of the negro slaves has been purchased from the colonies at a vast expense.

When the democratic advance has proved its strength and morality by such conquests, when it has

had the good fortune to mingle its cause with causes so holy, we cannot discover what is to check its course; every circumstance seems to lend it aid; every logical reform leads to another reform, every victory gained is the pledge of a new victory. The singular impulse that has been given to the public mind leads not to a change of institutions, but to their examination. It is inquired if it be reasonable to have justices of peace as magistrates, whose entire qualification is their wealth, and to have men as legislators whose only merit is, that they were born lords. It is inquired if it be reasonable that representatives, chosen by the people, should be trammelled and controlled by lords who are not so chosen. The church itself and its abuses are put on trial; the oldest prejudices are assailed; religious intolerance is attacked in its very citadel; old puritanism is vanquished, and the leader of the Irish Catholics is honoured with a popular oration in the capital of Scotland.[1] A farther advance is made; the boldness of the English spirit is carried so far, that the equity of primogeniture and entails begins to be suspected.

Thus, undeniably, democracy is making its way in England; its progress is manifest and constant, and it will perhaps be less difficult to destroy the privileges of the aristocracy, than to reach the length of discussing them.

But though this movement in England is continuous, and though the progress grows more rapid as it becomes more logical, we must also confess that the English democracy is as yet only at the beginning of

its career; though it has already made great progress, it has not yet established its empire. Its adversary will not confess itself vanquished for one day's defeat; and by the side of the forces which urge forward the car of reform, there are considerable powers that resist, or at least endeavour to moderate, its progress.

All the splendid existences of the aristocracy, the influence of large fortunes, the splendour of illustrious names, the multitude of individual conditions that depend on the nobility, and those which have been regulated on the belief in its duration; the popularity of the old families invested with the privileges attached, the prodigious exertions of those, who having recently come into possession of these privileges, labour to guard so precious an advantage, and one obtained with so much difficulty; the ambition of those who aspire to the aristocratic ranks, and who, though they have not yet gained their object, are so near it, that they defend it before it is reached: the number of capitalists who abound in England, whose only thought is to increase their wealth, and who, having need of peace to pursue their designs, are alarmed at every agitation in the state, whether the movement is made backwards or forwards;—all this forms an extraordinary mass of influence, passions, and interests, which openly or secretly tend to retard, if not to impede, the advance of democratic reform.

One of the greatest obstacles to democracy in England is, that philosophic equality is almost unknown. Some superior minds comprehend it, a few perhaps love it, but no one has a passion for it; and among

the people there is neither a taste for it, nor an idea of it. The habits of the country are so impregnated with aristocracy, that the very peasant feels its influence, and in his most laborious efforts it is not equality, but inequality, that he pursues. His stimulus to exertion is far less the condition of those whose equal he will be, than that of those whose superior he aspires to become. However, he pursues his object honourably. It is not by humbling others, but by elevating himself, that he aims at becoming great; and if he fails, he submits without a murmur to chances more prosperous than his own, that have gained the privileges to which he aspired. So long as this sentiment will prevail among the lower classes, the aristocracy will preserve a mighty power.

But democracy has a more formidable enemy in England, and one visible to every eye, the church.

We may, doubtless, perceive in England some signs of decline in religious faith. Philosophical scepticism has penetrated into the upper classes, where it is disguised under the mask of Unitarianism. Among the lower classes, mechanical labours, by materialising man, remove him farther from religion, which in truth is nothing more than the bond which unites the soul to that which is the most widely separated from matter, God.

Whether from philosophic tendencies, or from physical degradation, it is certain that there was never perhaps a period when there were so many in England belonging to no definite creed as at present.

But though these symptoms of irreligion and incre-

dulity are more apparent every day, they are as yet rare accidents in England. Of grave importance for the future, they have but slight weight for the present. Taken in the mass, England is still profoundly religious, Christian and Protestant; and the English church, the official form of its worship, is singularly popular.

In truth, the Protestantism of England is not uniform; it is calculated, that the dissenters from the Established Church, Quakers, Methodists, &c., form one-half of the population; and these, though fervent believers, are not necessarily animated by the passions which belong to the church of England. It must be added, that as the dissenters belong principally to the lower classes, all that is not in accordance with the church may be regarded as imbued with democratic tendencies. But it would be a mistake to suppose that the dissenters, though nearly equal in number to the members of the establishment, form an equally powerful party. Ranged under the same banner, the members of the establishment form a close and compact phalanx, whose strength is increased by union; whilst the dissenters, who would be so strong if united, forming as many separate bodies as there are different sects, are weakened down by division.

There is, besides, in the long existence and in the recollections attached to the Anglican church, something very pleasing to the national spirit of the English. They see in it the living tradition of the Reformation, and the continued triumph of the Protestant faith over Catholicism. The church has all the passions of the people on its side; it knows this, and

every time that the aristocracy is in danger, the church comes to its aid, denouncing its assailants as the secret enemies of the church. The clamours it raises retain a great number who would be well inclined to destroy aristocratic privileges, but who fear to touch an edifice in which the church is a column, lest the column should fall with the rest of the building. This religious fear is, perhaps, the circumstance which of late days has most tended to suspend the democratic movement. The English reformers having imprudently avowed their intention of reforming the church itself, reform has been stopped short. The rejection of the bill for the abolition of church-rates in England,[3] may be regarded as the halting place of the movement that originated in the parliamentary reform of 1832. From a multitude of causes, which it is not within the scope of this work to examine, England is attached to aristocratic and religious institutions, and adverse to a change.

How, then, can we suppose that England will effect or permit the extensive reforms which Ireland requires? Will she not, in her attachment to her old constitution, believe that it cannot be destroyed in Ireland without being weakened in England? Will not every alteration of the tenure of property in one country be perilous to property in the other? If the privileges of birth and fortune be overthrown in Ireland, can they be maintained in England? And the church, that corner-stone of the British constitution, the *Established Church of England and Ireland*, can it be glorious and powerful in one country, after having been demolished in the other?

Such objections, even supposing them ill grounded, are so completely in accordance with the passions of the people of England, that it may be boldly foretold, that she will not make all the changes that are necessary in Ireland.

Perhaps England will be wrong not to abolish the institutions in Ireland that she wishes to maintain for herself; perhaps the destruction of these institutions in the country hostile to them would be a means of their preservation in the country that is content with them; perhaps it would be a proof of great wisdom on the part of the English legislator, to recognise and declare openly, that different forms of government are necessary for countries whose social condition is so dissimilar, and that other laws are necessary for other habits. This principle once established and understood, many of the difficulties connected with Ireland would vanish.

Ireland would no longer have reason to complain that she is treated differently from England; and the latter, on her part, would not dispute the necessity of a different form of government. At present, it is absurd, that laws fitted to consolidate the aristocracy and church of England should be enacted for Ireland. The latter rejects them, and with reason; and nevertheless England might say, "you ask for the same laws." It is also an error, when reforms, liberal rather than democratic, having been accomplished in England, are extended to Ireland. Aristocratic England has need of more liberty; Ireland requires more equality. The English government is then wise when it

refuses to Ireland what it grants to England; and yet Ireland may say, since you impose upon me your social irregularity, give me also your political liberty.

These inextricable difficulties in a system of uniform government for two countries would disappear as soon as it was established that each people has need of its peculiar legislation, and that Ireland should be treated otherwise than England, not because it is inferior, but because it is different.

But whilst we admit that England would act wisely and justly in pursuing such a course, we may, nevertheless, foresee that it will not be possible for her to act in such a manner. A single obstacle will be sufficient to prevent her,—the prejudices of England, and her passions, which are more powerful than her interests.

Such a condition is, doubtless, sad and pregnant with grave consequences; but, before deducing them, ought we not first to explain more completely the conditions of the problem?

If it be true that England cannot, or rather will not, effect the reforms in Ireland, the necessity of which we have demonstrated, does it follow that she will reform nothing in that country? Assuredly not. Everything, indeed, proves that the aggregate of the proposed reforms would be repugnant to English feelings, but each of them separately would not encounter equal hostility. Should we not, consequently, among the reforms pointed out, distinguish those which England would absolutely, and those which would be partially, admitted? We believe that all the reforms we have

mentioned are necessary to the peace and prosperity of Ireland; but if the accomplishing of all is impossible, would not the best, or rather the least defective, plan be that which would permit some of them to be executed?

Besides, how is it possible to pass an absolute judgment on the feelings of a whole nation? There are some features universally diffused through the general aspect of a country, which allow of our attributing certain tastes and distastes to the great mass of the population; but such common features are few. A great people, especially a free people, is not so uniform in all its parts; the difference of classes and ranks, the variety of political interests, religious divisions, give rise to a multitude of opposing sentiments and contradictory passions. It is not always the same sentiment that triumphs; sometimes one notion prevails, sometimes another: the one in possession of power to-day, destroys what the other erected the day before. When, then, we have examined what a people will or can do under given circumstances, we cannot carry the investigation very far, unless we distinguish the different elements of which this people is composed; and, after having made the distinction, we must carefully examine the nature and bearings of each. Consequently, after having examined what England, viewed as a whole, would do for Ireland, we must analyse the English people, and appreciate what it might effect under the successive influence of the different passions and opposite interests by which

it is divided. In other words, we must examine what each of the great English parties would do for Ireland.

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## CHAPTER II.

### WHAT EACH OF THE ENGLISH PARTIES COULD ACCOMPLISH FOR IRELAND.

THERE are three great parties in England—the Tories, the Radicals, and the Whigs: let us examine what Ireland may expect from each.

### SECT. I.—*The Tory Party.*

The English Tories are the party that displays the most anxious desire and firm will to preserve the institutions of the country intact: in their love for what exists, they defend all privileges, protect all abuses, and stigmatise the partisans of every reform as enemies of the constitution. They are the most constant and devoted friends of the church; in a word, they offer the highest expression of the aristocratic and religious passions which England contains.

It is not enough to say, that it would be impossible for this party to make the changes in Ireland which the country requires. If England, with its various

interests and opposite passions, would be generally adverse to such reforms, how can they be expected from the party in which all the passions most hostile to innovation are concentrated?

In truth, a new party has lately been formed under the banners of the old Tory party, less absolute than that is in its principles, and which, whilst it displays the same attachment to the ancient institutions of England, does not profess an equal respect for the abuses with which they are mingled. This new party, commonly called Conservative, and of which Sir R. Peel is the leader, is generally composed of the more moderate and enlightened Tories, who comprehend that the best means of rescuing the assailed aristocracy, would be to correct its most salient vices as fast as they are revealed by time, and whenever their reform is imperiously demanded by public opinion. This party is, perhaps, the most faithful image of England, considered by itself; everything leads to the belief, that it would have the majority; indeed it would already possess it in parliament, only that Scotland and Ireland return one hundred and fifty representatives, most of whom are Radicals or Whigs.

But it is easy to see that this second party would not be less incapable than the first of giving Ireland the satisfaction which she requires.

It is not merely abuses that must be corrected in Ireland; it is institutions that must be destroyed. Now, how would these institutions be destroyed by a party, whose very name indicates that its mission is conservative?

In order to effect great reforms in Ireland, it is absolutely necessary to engage in a struggle with the aristocratic and religious passions of England. This the conservative party would hardly do, for such passions are its main support: its moderation consists in not exciting them, and in striving to assuage them; but it could not combat them. This party might, doubtless, make useful innovations in the details of public administration, but it would not execute the reforms suited to changing the social and political economy of the country.

Still there are many who believe that the conservative party would be the best to reform the vicious institutions of Ireland; they found their opinion on the fact, that the greatest changes which have been made in Irish institutions were effected by moderate Tories, and they quote as an example the concession of Catholic emancipation, in 1829, by the Wellington administration. But we must not confound what has been done by a party, with what may be expected from its principles.

Catholic emancipation was not in its nature a Tory measure: Lord Wellington undertook it, not because it was conformable to his principles, but although it was adverse to them. He has himself declared that, in accomplishing it, he did not yield to feelings of justice, but to the necessity of tranquillising Ireland, which menaced England with insurrection. He did not freely execute reform; he made a necessary concession. Now we are examining whether, if the conservative party undertook the government of Ireland,

it would be compelled to make concessions—we are examining whether it would be in the nature of its principles to effect reforms.

Even if the Conservative party had the power and will to execute certain reforms in Ireland, there is one absolutely impossible for it to undertake, and which would stop it at once—the reform of the church. As religious questions are those which excite the most lively passions in England, the most temperate of the Conservatives could not apply their principles of moderation in matters that concern the church. Here the abuse is quite as sacred as the principle. But we have already seen that no reform in Ireland could be salutary, which did not, in the first place, subvert the Anglican supremacy. Thus the very first reform required in Ireland—that without which every other would be vain and fruitless—is precisely that which the Conservative party would be utterly unable to accomplish.

## Sect. II.—*The Radical Party.*

If the Tory party is by its nature unfit for the great reforms that Ireland requires, is not the party most capable of these reforms *that* whose doctrines are most opposed to those of the Tories, and which represents in the English nation the opinions most favourable to movement and progress, as the Conservative party expresses the passions most friendly to immobility?

We may certainly grant that if the English Radical party were in power, it would effect great reforms in Ireland. Still it would not be a task exempt from difficulty to determine what acts should be expected from its principles. We clearly perceive its general tendency towards democracy, but it would be difficult to say how far it goes on this road. Its march is uncertain, its theories vague, its plans are not yet formed. Either because it does not itself know the object to which it advances, or that it fears to frighten England by showing it, it is certain that this object is not clearly perceived. In its largest and most explicit professions of faith, the Radical party claims annual parliaments, universal suffrage, and vote by ballot; important reforms, without doubt, but which are means, rather than ends. We may, it is true, foresee that if the Radicals were masters of parliament and power, they would abolish the political and civil privileges of the aristocracy, and thus remove one of the greatest obstacles to the abolition of the same privileges in Ireland. But who can tell when the Radical party will have the power of executing such reforms? The party is at present small; it has little influence with the English nation, for it is too far in advance of the people; it counts but few members in parliament, and power is so far from it, that we need not inquire how power would be used by the party. Even had the party sufficient strength to deprive the English and Irish aristocracy of their civil and political privileges, could it at the same time abolish their religious privileges,—that is to say, the reform which in

Ireland must precede all others? We may doubt it. And the obstacle by which it would be checked would be found within itself.

These religious passions, which we have already seen as powerful in England, are, perhaps, nowhere more active than with the Radical party, where they are more violent and less enlightened than in any other. In truth, the Radical party being principally composed of dissenters from the established church, the fanaticism of religious party, which pushes it towards democracy, would, in this respect, appear favourable to Ireland; but at present its passions are Protestant, rather than democratic, and the Irish are Catholics. The English dissenters, most of whom are Radicals, are assuredly enemies of the supremacy of the church; still they would hesitate to overthrow it in Ireland, through fear of giving a triumph to the Catholics. These passions of the Radical party against Ireland grow weaker every day, and are combated by the leaders of the party with all their might; still they occasionally burst forth. To quote only one example; when, after various attempts, a plan was formed by the English government for paying the Catholic clergy of Ireland, a fierce opposition was kindled by the dissenters, who branded as an act of impiety the payment of Popish priests by a Protestant state. Thus the Radicals, like the Tory party, might be stopped short at its first step in Irish reform by a cause arising from religion; with this difference, that the Radicals, in forbearing to attack the supremacy of a

church so essentially aristocratic as that of Ireland, would do violence to their political principles, whilst the Tories, by preserving it, would act consistently with their passions, their doctrines, and their interests.

Let us add, that the prejudices of the Englishman against the Irishman, the contempt which the first so commonly feels for the second, are nowhere so strong as amongst the lower classes, where the Radicals naturally look for support.

The preceding observations apply with still greater force to an extreme Radical party which quite recently has manifested itself in England, and which, collecting large assemblages, is distinguished by a singular violence of language, and a great exaggeration of theories. In direct opposition to the moderate Radicals, who, not to alarm England, doubtless announce less than they wish to effect, this new party seems anxious to terrify the Conservative interests as much as possible: not that its doctrines give a clear idea of its projects; it does not say precisely what it will do, but takes care to spread abroad that it will accomplish great and terrible things; it is not satisfied with reform, it demands revolution; its motto is, the employment of physical force; it collects multitudes at night by torch-light, and, to remove all doubt respecting its designs, it invokes the memory and proceedings of Danton. It is doubtful if the Radical party, composed principally of the most fanatic dissenters of England, would do more for Ireland than the moderate Radicals: but what is certain is, that

it would have far less power, for it has gone so far in advance of the people that it has left the nation behind altogether.

## Sect. III.—*The Whig Party.*

We have just seen why, from different reasons, the two parties, which represent the most contrary ideas and opposite passions in England, could not effect any important reform in Ireland; one, because it blindly supports the constitution; the other, because it is supposed to be the enemy of the constitution; the first, because it has not the will to make any innovation; the second, because it will not be entrusted with the power.

But between these two parties there is a third, composed of those whom Tory immobility disgusts, and whom Radicalism terrifies; who, sincerely attached to the institutions of the country, nevertheless believe that they may be modified, and who, by turns ardent in attack and zealous in defence, admit enough of reform to advance the onward progress of democracy, and at the same time are sufficiently moderate in change not to alarm the aristocratic influences of England. This middle party is that of the Whigs.

From the few preceding words, it will be at once evident that it would not be in the power of the Whigs to execute all the changes which we have shewn to be necessary in Ireland; for a destruction is what is required in that country, and the natural inclinations of the Whigs do not lead them beyond

reform. In fact, it is only on the condition of destroying nothing that they retain the power of reform; but we may also see that whilst the Whigs are interdicted from entirely abolishing the institutions of Ireland, they at least derive from their principles the faculty, and from their interests the desire, of effecting great innovations.

The Whigs, who have the will to execute reforms, of which the Tories are destitute, possess also the power in which the Radicals are deficient; for they are at present the ruling party in Great Britain. They have, besides, motives of a different nature to effect reforms in Ireland; innumerable evils have accumulated in that country during the period that the Tories, enemies of all change, possessed power; the Whigs, who, after fifty years of exclusion, are come back to power, must naturally apply their remedies where the most grievous wounds are to be healed.

This generous disposition is strengthened by personal feelings. They are so much the more inclined to carry on reforms in Ireland, as they are prevented from effecting them in England. In the latter country, political parties are so uncertain and so divided, and the passions most favourable to the Whigs so uncertain and variable, that they have a great difficulty in devising a reform which, while it satisfies one division of their supporters, will not offend others. Still they must continue to reform so long as they carry on the government; this was the sole object for which they were restored to power. If conservation alone were required from the rulers, the charge would be

entrusted to the Tories, whose business and right are the maintenance of existing institutions. Thus, always compelled to advance, and not knowing how to take a step without stumbling, the Whigs willingly turn to Ireland, which opens to them a limitless career of reform, and gives them ground less difficult to hold, because the conservative passions of England are there less violent.

Since the Whigs have the power of doing many things for Ireland, and since, at the same time, they are limited in their sphere of action, it becomes necessary to inquire what acts are within their reach, and what beyond their power. It is important to know how far they can advance in the reform of Irish institutions; which of the wants of Ireland they will be able to satisfy, and which they will be unable to supply, and what influence on the country and its future condition will be produced by the reforms within their power; in one word, we must investigate how far they can apply to the evils of Ireland the remedy already indicated; that is to say, the abolition of the civil, political, and religious privileges of the aristocracy.

## SUBSECTION I.

### *Reform of Religious Privileges.*

The first, and perhaps the greatest, advantage which the Whigs possess over the Tories in all questions relating to Ireland is, that they are not at once stopped short by the obstacle of the church.

The Whigs are assuredly attached to the Anglican church, and prove themselves its ardent partisans; but they do not, like the others, insist on its preservation at any price. The Tories say, "Let Ireland perish rather than the Anglican church." On the contrary, the Whigs say, "Let us save Ireland, and also endeavour to preserve the church." The former would consent to make some reforms in Ireland, provided the church could be maintained in all its privileges and monopolies; in other words, they would offer some partial remedies to the country on condition of leaving intact the primary cause of its evils. The Whigs, on the contrary, look first to the miseries of Ireland, and the necessity of effecting their cure. They would be anxious to establish peace and tranquillity in the country without touching the church; but if, in pursuing this object, they are impeded by any abuses of the church, without any regard to the Anglican principle that fetters them, they abolish the principle and the abuse.

We everywhere find in the acts of the Tories and Whigs the consequences of this difference at starting. Take for example the doctrines and proceedings of each respecting the religious instruction of the people.

For more than a century the lower classes of Ireland were deprived of every kind of instruction, simply because they were Catholics, and the only schools in Ireland were Protestant. The Tories were then in power; and when reproached with an institution which gave the poor Irish no choice between ignorance

and apostasy, they replied, as they still maintain, that national education is a privilege of the church which ought not to be taken away.

The Whigs, on the contrary, believing that the instruction of the people is essential to the safety of Ireland, recognise primarily the necessity of education; and as it has been clearly proved that Irish Catholics will not send their children to Protestant schools, the Whigs have been forced to attack the monopoly of the church; and, in spite of opposition, they have established new schools from which everything sectarian is banished, and where religious liberty is assured to all creeds. The establishment of these national schools was one of the first acts of the Whigs, and there is not one that does them greater honour.[1]

The Tory party believes the rights of the church so sacred, that a violation of them appears the greatest of evils; and when Ireland contests one of the rights of the church, for instance when it resists the payment of tithes, the Tories believe that the church should, at all hazards, be maintained in the integrity of its privileges: if the whole nation resists, its resistance must be beaten down, and the last Irishman exterminated, rather than that tithes should remain unpaid. In similar circumstances, the Whigs act differently; like the Tories, they wish the debts due to the church should be paid; they even prescribe this duty as one of rigorous obligation; but when they find the whole population rebellious, they do not take the same means of quelling the rebellion; they try rigorous means, but they do not persevere in them; they

stop short at the commencement of the sanguinary career which the Tories traverse completely; the general interests of the country appear to them superior to those of the church, which nevertheless touch them nearly. They then endeavour to appease the people without overthrowing the church. They do not abolish tithes, the suppression of which would be a great blow to the church; but they endeavour, by modifying the institution, to render it less odious, and, by calming the popular passions, to render the government of the country possible.

It was thus that, in 1832, the Whigs abolished the most unpopular ecclesiastical tax, church-rates. And thus, in 1838, judging from the experience of five years that the Irish were resolved to pay no more tithes, the Whigs reduced the tithes one fourth, and transferred the obligation of payment from the tenant to the landlord. Such changes do not attack the evil in its root, but they render it less painful.

It does not enter into Whig principles to abolish religious supremacy in Ireland, which would be the first condition of peace and prosperity in the country; but they can at least render the fatal principle, which they do not destroy, less offensive and less odious, and that is a great deal. The Anglican church is not the only wound of Ireland, but it is the most sensitive, and the cure of the others is impossible if it be not assuaged. This is the reason why, under present circumstances, the Whigs alone can govern Ireland.

If the Whigs were animated by mere vulgar ambition, it would be their interest, so long as they retain

the government, to protract the reform of the Irish church; for, so long as that church shall be maintained with all its defects in the midst of the violent passions it excites, accession to power will be very difficult to the Tories, whose very name would drive Ireland into insurrection, and who could not make their peace with that country, unless they began by attacking the religious institution to whose support they are so firmly bound.

Still, when we see the Irish church attacked by the Whigs, we can understand that this is not the object to which they would choose to apply their reforming principles, for it is the battle-field on which they feel least at ease. If they struggle first against the church when they enter on the career of reform, it is because the church is the first adversary that they find before them, and which they must either overcome, or withdraw from the contest. The reform of the church, then, is not so much an object which they pursue, as an obstacle which they labour to remove.

## SUBSECTION II.

### *What Reforms the Whigs can make in the civil privileges of the Irish Aristocracy.*

Now that the religious obstacle is removed, what reforms may be made in the civil and political privileges of the aristocracy? This question presents difficulties whose importance will be understood in the

sequel. The English Whigs are certainly very aristocratic in most of their passions and principles; a single fact will justify this assertion: they have governed England for about eight years.

On the other hand, we are forced to recognise that they have effected many reforms, the effect, if not the principle, of which is singularly democratic. Thus parliamentary reform, municipal reform, the withdrawal of certain powers from justices of peace by the New Poor Law, are the work of the Whigs. Thus many acts favourable to democracy have been passed by the aristocratic Whigs. Is there not here at least an apparent contradiction? In what, then, are they democrats? In what are they aristocrats?

This inconsistency in the character of the English Whigs will disappear, if we take care to distinguish between the principles by which they govern civil society, and those which they apply to political society.

If we study the doctrines of those Whigs who approximate most closely to Radicalism, we shall find that they go so far as to sacrifice a part of the political privileges which belong to large properties in England.[1] Doubtless they deem it just that a certain number of men, by the mere chances of birth and fortune, should have a right to govern their fellows,—should be justices of the peace because they are rich, and legislators because they are lords. Still they do not consider the institution of justices of the peace or of lords as inviolable.

Thus they admit that if the House of Peers became

an obstacle to innovations considered necessary, this body ought to be, not abolished, but reformed, and composed of persons who had acquired, either by great personal merit, or by fortune, the right of representing a principle or an interest in parliament; they would willingly invite a greater number of citizens to take a share in affairs of state; and whilst they extended the circle of electoral capacity, they would increase the number of functions conferred by popular election. Thus it would not be contrary to their principles to organise county-boards, where citizens, elected by the people, would perform the functions now exercised by justices of peace. Their tendency, then, would be, by enlarging popular representation, to give, by elections, that administration to the middle classes, of which the landed proprietors have the privilege and the monopoly. In this body of doctrines there is assuredly a very democratic leaning.

But these same men, who would allow equality to be established in political society, do not show the same tolerance when the question of regulating civil society is mooted. They do not obstinately adhere to the preservation of the hereditary right of sitting in parliament to the eldest son; but they obstinately defend the right of the eldest son to take the whole of his father's inheritance, to the exclusion of his brothers and sisters. They can understand that the government of society ought not to be placed in the hands of a narrow oligarchy; but when the political privilege is suppressed, they will consent that this oligarchy shall have the monopoly of half the land in

England, and keep it for ever by means of entails and civil laws, which render land to some extent inalienable in its hands; that is to say, whilst they consent to introduce equality into political life, they are firmly resolved to maintain inequality in civil society.

The Whigs thus form in their minds, and strive to establish in the country, two distinct zones, as it were, in each of which they establish a different principle of government, as democratic in the one as it is aristocratic in the other; and, as if there existed no intimate link between the government of a people and its habits, they do not appear to suspect that the doctrine of equality admitted into the state can ever enter into the family; and they seem to believe that property will remain the monopoly of a few, after political rights have been shared between all. This is not the place for examining how far such a distinction is logical, and whether this artificial separation between the man and the citizen can be durable; but it is important to show that this theory is a summary of the principles of the most advanced Whigs, because it contains a primary solution of the important question mooted at the beginning of our inquiry.

In fact, cannot everybody see that, from the very nature of this doctrine, the English Whigs neither could nor would abolish the civil privileges of the Irish aristocracy; that is to say, reform the laws which keep nearly the whole soil of Ireland in the hands of that body? Does it not also follow that though the Whigs, according to their own principles, cannot reform the civil privileges of the Irish aristocracy, they

may be led by the same principles to abolish its political privileges? The first of these consequences is simple, and requires no comment; it clearly shows what, in such a case, the Whigs cannot do. The second, not less manifest, is rather more complicated; for, while showing how the Whigs, in another case, may effect several things, it is necessary to inquire what those things are. Let us then see what changes the Whigs can introduce into the political society of Ireland, and what political privileges of the aristocracy it is in their power to reform.

## Subsection III.

### *Reforms which the Whigs might make in the political Privileges of the Irish Aristocracy.*

The Whigs, when in power, may attack the Irish aristocracy in two ways easily distinguished from each other. 1. By general reforms in the constitution, equally applicable to England, Ireland, and Scotland. 2. By reforms special to Ireland.

#### *General Reforms.—Vote by Ballot.*

Among the number of Whig reforms which, extending over the three kingdoms, would of course affect Ireland, the most important is vote by ballot, because it has often been discussed in parliament, and has made such progress as to be now admitted as an open question.

It is an opinion generally diffused amongst the English Whigs and Radicals, that if the parliamentary reform of 1832, which more than doubled popular representation, has not produced all the democratic effects expected from it, this result must be attributed to the mode in which the electors give their suffrage; that is to say, by public vote, which places them under the influence of the aristocracy; and it is supposed that if the vote were secret, as in France, the electors, rendered more independent, would prove more friendly to the reforms demanded by the popular will.

Without examining this question here under its different aspects, it will be sufficient to observe, that were the principle of secret voting adopted at elections, the democratic advantage of the change would be, at the least, doubtful in Ireland.

It is easy to conceive the support which secret voting would give to the independence of democratic voters, where the aristocracy is not only an established power, but moreover a dominant power, whose empire is accepted. The vote by ballot is a weapon of the weak against the strong. But, for the very same reason, might it not have an opposite effect in Ireland, where democracy is the popular power, and aristocracy the power feeble and assailed?

The Irish elector has no absolute need of the ballot to be independent. In truth, we must allow that the resistance he makes to the efforts of corruption may bring evils on his head from which he would be sheltered by the secret vote;—tenants are expelled from

their farms for having voted against their landlords, and these might escape these cruel reprisals if protected by the ballot. But such acts of vengeance, which ruin some unfortunate beings, are also fatal to their authors; in the first place, they prove the powerlessness of corruption, which never loses temper save when it is inefficacious, and they excite in the highest degree popular resentment against the aristocracy.

Secrecy of voting, which is not in Ireland absolutely necessary to the independence of those who attack the aristocracy, might possibly injure the democracy by protecting those who oppose it. We must not forget, that besides the influence of the upper classes at an election, there is also the influence of the people: now this influence, powerful in public voting, wholly ceases under the ballot.

There is something solemn in England, but more especially in Ireland, when the electors openly name the representative they choose in the presence of a countless assembly, which presses round them, excites, conjures, supplicates, menaces them, blesses those who vote in accordance with popular feelings, reviles and execrates those who pronounce the name of an enemy, and causes to be heard the great and terrible voice of the people, which, though often unjust, is always sincere, and always imposing even to those who affect to despise it. In England, the eye of the rich is most feared by the voter; in Ireland, the observation of the poor man is the object of dread.

Thus, vote by ballot, though favourable to demo-

cracy in England, might in Ireland prove advantageous to the aristocracy.

*Political Reforms peculiar to Ireland, which the Whigs might make in Parishes and Municipal Corporations.*

The reforms which the Whigs are making or may make in the political powers of the aristocracy, have necessarily for their object the powers belonging to that body, either in the state, the country, the corporate towns, or the parishes. When they abolished church-rates in 1833, they destroyed a privilege, at once religious and political, exercised by the Anglican aristocracy in the Irish parish. Here we may add, that they have no other reform to make, for the Irish parish, of which the whole life was an abuse, may be said no longer to exist, since the abuse has been abolished.

The Whigs would wish to affect a reform not less extensive in the municipal corporations of Ireland, and which would be more complete, for here they undertake not only to destroy but to rebuild. They are anxious to destroy the Anglican and aristocratic monopoly of these corporations, and to construct on their ruins a free and democratic municipal organisation. The abuses of the Irish municipalities were so gross and revolting, that their most zealous partisans were forced to abandon them; and the only question at issue between Whigs and Tories is the amount of

qualification which shall determine the right of citizenship. (Even this difference has been so narrowed by the bill of the present year, that the question may be considered as settled. Corporation reform will probably pass this session, and certainly cannot be delayed longer than the next; it is therefore unnecessary to pursue the discussion.)

The reform of the political powers possessed by the Irish aristocracy in the municipal corporations, and of those which it formerly held in the parish, is doubtless important; but that which is of greatest weight, that without which all others would be nearly vain, is the reform of the privileges belonging to the aristocracy in the counties. It is in the county that the aristocracy must be attacked, if the blow is designed for its heart; there are the justices of the peace, there are the grand juries, and we must particularly know what reforms the Whigs can execute in the Irish counties, if we wish to have the exact measure of their ability to attack the Irish aristocracy in its political powers.

*Reforms which the Whigs may effect in the County.*

We have already shown, that in order to overthrow the political powers of the Irish aristocracy, the first step should be to centralise the administration of the counties: the first question, then, is to know if the Whigs can execute this system of centralisation. Here it is especially necessary to distinguish between the principles which guide the Whigs in the government

of England, and those which they apply to their administration in Ireland.

Since the Whigs have come into power, a certain tendency towards centralisation in the administration of public affairs is perceptible. This tendency is necessarily exhibited in every county, where either democracy or absolute power aim at establishing themselves; for, as both aspire to level ranks, they have need of an instrument of equality. As we see, then, democracy develope itself in England, we may be sure that its progress will be manifested by some effort at centralisation. Thus, the Reform Bill of 1832 was followed by three laws tending to centralise relief to the poor, prison discipline, and a system of civil registration: laws purely social in their object, but essentially political by the new forms of administration which they introduce into the state, and which perhaps, for this reason, may be regarded as the most marked expression of the democratic movement that England received from the revolution of 1830. Still a person would be deceived, who supposed that these laws had any analogy to the system of centralisation established in France, provincial or municipal.

With the French, when any local power, aristocratic or democratic, is abolished, the destruction tends to the profit of the central government, which takes to itself the entire suppressed authority, and exercises it easily by one of its innumerable agents.

When the central government in England attacks the aristocracy, it does not proceed so openly and so plainly; it advances on this course with extreme

prudence and great reserve; it spares the very power that it wishes to despoil. Thus, when the Whigs deprived the aristocracy of the exclusive administration of the poor laws, they instituted a central commission in London, to maintain uniform principles of public charity throughout England; but, at the same time, they instituted local boards, composed partly of justices of peace, and partly of citizens elected under qualifications which tend to give the administration to the middle classes.

It is assuredly a phenomenon worthy of observation, that this system of semi-centralisation, by which power is secured at the centre, should at the same time extend it to the circumference; it seems as if the two principles which we have already seen disputing empire with each other, Norman centralisation and Saxon liberty, had made their peace, and were for the future united against the aristocracy as a common enemy, which is thus pressed upon both by the prince and the people.

This moderate centralisation, which inflicts very feeble blows on the aristocracy, satisfies almost all the friends of reform in England, where the desire of weakening the aristocracy does not prevent a fear of despotism in the central government; and this fear is more natural in England than any other country. If, in countries less free, it is perilous to establish an absolute system of centralisation, because it may at some future time produce an invincible obstacle to the development of liberty, how much more formidable is this danger to a people amongst whom liberty exists,

and where, consequently, the danger is not to compromise the greatest of blessings in the future, but to lose it in the very moment of enjoyment? At this moment there is not a parish or municipality in England which does not form a true republic, a free democracy. Would the English people act wisely, if, in order to aid the central power in striking at the aristocracy, they would resign their rights and liberties to the government, at the risk of not being able to resume them when the enemy had been overthrown? Is not that country in a fortunate position, which, requiring certain reforms in its institutions, can confer on the central authority sufficient power to effect them, without bestowing so much as would render that authority tyrannical?

But though such attempts at centralisation might satisfy England, they would be utterly insufficient for Ireland, where the legitimate passions and interests of the people require that the aristocracy should be openly attacked. The condition of England allows of a doubt, whether it would be better to accomplish a rapid reform at the risk of liberty, or accept slower reforms with the certainty of remaining free. But such a question cannot exist for Ireland, where the destruction of the aristocracy is the first of all necessities. Thus, the Whigs employ more potent means of centralisation against the aristocracy in Ireland than in England.

We have already seen how, at the close of the last century, certain powers belonging to the aristocracy were, for the sake of its own interests, taken from it

and given to the central government. A judge removable at the will of the viceroy was appointed to preside at the quarter sessions; stipendiary magistrates were appointed to aid the ordinary functions of justices of peace; and, finally, a constabulary force was appointed to protect the properties of the rich. These were so many means taken by the central government to aid and defend the feeble and unskilful aristocracy of which it was the ally and friend.

Scarcely had the Whigs obtained possession of the government, when they turned on the aristocracy the centralisation which had been formerly established for its protection. The assistant-barrister, who formerly received from the central government the mission, tacit or implied, of sustaining the upper classes against the people, is now charged with the support of the people against the aristocracy. Formerly he employed all his art to conceal the injustice or the incapacity of the justices of peace, now he labours to throw a veil over the faults or errors of the people. The stipendiary magistrates are now appointed, not to aid, but to supply the place of justices of the peace. They amounted to eighty-one in 1837, fifty of whom had been nominated since 1835. These stipendiaries are popular in Ireland; they generally act better than the aristocracy, and in all cases they have the merit of not being its agents. Finally, the constabulary force has been completely centralised since 1836, and its direction transferred from the aristocracy to the viceroy.

But not only do the Whigs turn against the aristocracy the old laws which were passed to give it strength; they also endeavour to create new instruments of centralisation, or to perfect those which already exist. Justices of peace, since the year 1831, have been subjected to a regular system of superintendence;[1] the powers of grand juries have been restrained, and their deliberations opened to the public: finally, three central administrations have been formed in Ireland, each of which has inflicted a blow, more or less grave, on the aristocracy. The first is the Board of Public Works; the second, the Board of National Education; and the third, the Board of Poor Law Commissioners. The first is the one which strikes most directly against the power of the aristocracy in the counties, since it gives the government means of accomplishing those objects of which the grand juries had formerly the exclusive direction: the other two attain the same end indirectly—the former, because the establishment of a system of public charity demonstrates the indifference of the rich for the poor; the second, because it bestows knowledge on the people, and thus gives it new strength against its enemies.[2]

We have now seen how far the Whigs have employed centralisation to reform the institutions of Ireland. We see that they proceed less timidly in Ireland than in England; not that they transfer in a mass to the central government the powers of the humbled aristocracy, but that they centralise a part, confer new attributes on the government, and tram-

mel the power of the aristocracy in the portion of authority which it still retains. They are, however, far from effecting all the political reforms required in Ireland. They reform rather than overthrow the aristocracy of the counties; they weaken, they mutilate, but they do not venture to destroy it. We also found among the Whigs, though not so prominently as in other parties, that eternal tendency of English governments to make reforms in Ireland similar to those in England, and the constant disposition, when they displace a power, rather to distribute it among all ranks of society, than to give it to the central government alone. Thus it may be looked upon as probable, that if the Whigs abolished grand juries in counties, their functions would not be transferred to the central government, but to bodies chosen by popular election; a liberal, but a complicated system, suited to a country where the different classes of society, whose concurrence is desired, live in perfect harmony, but which is, perhaps, ill suited to Ireland, where the middle class is still in its infancy, where the people want the habit of self-guidance, and where the aristocracy is so antinational, that it is requisite not to look to the regulation, but to the abolition of its powers; an insufficient system in a country where the central government, though backed by the popular will, is far from being too strong in its contest with the aristocracy.

*Reforms which the Whigs may effect in the State.*

We have seen what political reforms the Whigs may effect in the parishes, the municipal corporations,

and the counties; the state remains to be considered. During the entire time that the Tories governed Ireland, the aristocracy possessed an immense political privilege in the state, namely—the constant favour, or rather the partiality, of the executive power.

The principles established by law are doubtless important, but the spirit in which they are enforced is of still greater weight. Now, under the rule of the Tories, the laws theoretically designed to protect the Irish aristocracy were also administered so as to gratify the most ardent passions of that body. It was then a received tradition among the governors of Ireland, that the laws were made for the aristocracy against the people, with the sole object of keeping the latter in servitude, and protecting the former against resistance. If a Catholic complained to government against a Protestant, or a poor man against a rich, the appeal was received with indifference or contempt. Justice itself, from the way in which it was administered by the agents of government, was corrupted at its very source. To give only one example, it was a constant custom at criminal trials in Tory times for the clerk of the crown to set aside Catholic jurors, and endeavour to form a jury composed exclusively of Protestants.

At this period the Orange party in Ireland was so powerful from the support given it by the executive power, that it would with impunity trample the popular party under its feet. Every year the anniversary of the battle of the Boyne, the triumph of Protestants over Catholics, was celebrated with all the demonstra-

tions most insulting to the vanquished. Not only did the government permit these insolent provocations of a faction to an entire people, but moreover if the humiliated people dared to raise its head, and struggle against its oppressors, the central power supported the latter in their tyranny, and placed the police and the army at their disposal.

The Whigs have introduced different maxims and proceedings into the government; they have prohibited Orange processions; they have endeavoured to render the administration of justice impartial, by leaving the jury-box accessible to citizens of every creed; they proclaim the principle, that public authority is instituted as much for the benefit of the people as of the upper classes, and if their balance inclined to one side more than the other, the scale would turn in favour of the poor, rather than of the rich.

In fact, it is sufficient to glance at Ireland, in order to discover that the Whig government not only withholds from the aristocracy the exorbitant protection which it received from the Tories, but also that it treats the aristocracy as a hostile body. The Whigs not only do not confer on that body the employments of which it formerly had the monopoly, they sometimes take away those which it still possesses. If a justice of peace, being a large landed proprietor, commits any fault, the government takes the opportunity of supplying his place by a stipendiary magistrate. If any public functionary takes a leading part as head of the Orange faction, he is dismissed very unceremoniously.

At the same time that the Whigs take away from the Irish aristocracy the favours and graces of the executive power, they also grant these favours and graces to the most violent enemies of that aristocracy: they appoint the most eminent men of the national party to public functions; they endeavour to increase the number of Catholics in the commission of the peace; from the lowest to the highest employments, from a seat on the bench to a place in the police, they select agents of the popular party. In truth, the Whig government of Ireland and the aristocracy of the country are at open war.

This proceeding of the government is not intelligible at first sight: though it is easy to comprehend why the Whigs in this country, as in England, should be the adversaries of the Tories, it is not so easy to understand why they should display a hostility to the entire aristocratic party which they do not manifest in England. In the latter country the most Radical law emanating from the Whigs is tempered in its execution, and even when directed against certain powers of the aristocracy, the government does not attack the aristocracy itself. In Ireland, on the contrary, the application of such a law by the Whigs is always more hostile to the aristocracy than the law itself. Whence does this difference arise?

The cause is to be found in the nature of the parties existing in the two countries. We have already seen that there are only two extreme parties in Ireland, the Tories and the Radicals; the Whig party is there unknown. We have also seen that the English

government established in Ireland, is under the absolute necessity of making a choice between the two parties, and attaching itself to one or the other; and that when it has declared for one of the two, it must give itself up to that one, body and soul, and yield to all its impulses.

When the Tories had the power, their representatives in Ireland inevitably fell under the yoke of the Orange party, of which they were the slaves, when they only wished to be its allies. When the Whigs succeeded to power, they were inevitably at the mercy of the opposite party; they had not even an opportunity for deliberating whether they would join the popular party. They found themselves necessarily fixed on that side, by the simple fact that the aristocracy, of which the Tory party is the sole expression, immediately assumed an attitude of hostility.

Perhaps it would be just to say, that the executive power in Ireland is more completely annihilated by its fusion with the popular party, than by its alliance with the aristocratic party. In the latter case it only sides with a faction hated by the people; it is, therefore, better able to regulate the assistance it affords; indeed it may limit itself to defending the party when attacked, and may withdraw its aid when that party becomes the aggressor. On the contrary, when the executive power in Ireland adopts the national cause, it is more irresistibly dragged on with it, and more blindly hurried forward by the popular torrent on which it is embarked.

It is not without some degree of alarm and repug-

nance that the English Whigs form the alliances which they are forced to contract in Ireland. They cannot, doubtless, but be disposed to strike at the Tory or aristocratic party, which has been their merciless adversary; but they are troubled not by the fate of their enemies, whom they combat but by the strength of the friends whom they mistrust. They would gladly see the Orange party fall in Ireland, and feel no disquietude, if the formidable power of a democratic party did not rise on its ruins. They fear the triumphs of their allies almost as much as the success of their adversaries, and timidly inflict a blow which, whilst it overthrows a detested enemy, may exalt a formidable friend. Their favourite object would be the creation of a Whig party, but they have made the attempt in vain. When the government in Ireland takes the side of the people, it becomes the instrument of the popular party.

We now see why the English Whigs are forced to be Radicals in Ireland: and this explains the clamour which the English Tories incessantly raise against the Whig government of Ireland, which, say they, and not without reason, gives to the laws enacted by parliament a more democratic application than the legislature intended. Hence also, we can understand why the Radicals of Ireland are much better satisfied with a Whig administration than those of England.

Although the Whigs do not give Ireland the institutions which the country would wish, still they do much for her by executing the laws according to her interests and desires. This is the reason why O'Con-

nell and all his friends have separated from the English Radicals in their late attacks on the Whigs. The Irish Radicals care little for what occurs in Canada, or even England itself, compared with what passes in Ireland. It is of little importance to them that parliament refuses to reform church-rates in England, after having abolished them in Ireland. They forgive the Whigs for being every day less radical in England, provided they do not retrograde in Ireland.

The attacks of the Whig government on the Irish aristocracy have not all the effect which might at the first glance be attributed to them. Almost all the reforms which are the work of an executive government are frail and transitory. When that changes, they disappear with it; if a Tory administration gained possession of power, it would soon put in force the old principles of government, and restore the aristocratic spirit to the execution of the laws. Most of the liberal institutions which seem the best established, such, for instance, as the system of national education, would receive a direction from the Tories which would change its principles. The public force, that is to say, the police and army, which the Whigs have placed at the service of the national party, would be soon restored to the disposal of the aristocratic party. These two bodies, blindly subject to the principle of passive obedience, would certainly sustain the popular party, so long as the government would require of them such support; but being for the most part composed of Englishmen and Protestants, they are at bottom friends to the Tory and Protestant party in Ire-

land; if another administration gave them different orders, they would much rather fire on the Catholics, whom they are now forced to protect, than injure the Anglicans, to whom they are now placed in opposition.

Still the administration of the Whigs is a great benefit to Ireland, not only in the present, but as regards the future. It has taught the Irish that there may exist among the English a party favourable to the people; and, consequently, that all governments coming from England need not necessarily be hateful.

The English Whigs have the advantage of being able to govern Ireland without having recourse to violent measures, with which the Tories could not dispense. For more than half a century, that is to say, from the time when oppressed Ireland awoke from its servitude, the English government has been unable to keep the country in obedience, without a certain number of exceptional laws, which, under the name of *insurrection acts*, or *coercion bills*, invested the central authority with extraordinary powers, to be used at its discretion. The chief of these powers consisted in proclaiming a county, and arbitrarily changing the jurisdiction in criminal matters; for instance, bringing before a court-martial crimes committed in a proclaimed county.

These extraordinary powers were exercised not merely for the suppression of political enterprises, such as seditions, rebellions, or conspiracies against the state. Their first object was rather to reach crimes of a social character; they had particularly in

view the constant and terrible war waged by the people of Ireland against the persons and properties of the rich. When the aristocracy of Ireland had the executive power on its side, it employed its political influence to exercise greater social oppression. It maltreated the poor and feeble with less reserve; it crushed more resolutely the wretch who rebelled against its rigours, when the cry of the unhappy found no echo, and when fearful laws checked his projects of retaliation. Thus, protected by a sort of legal terror, the rich in Ireland were more at their ease, collected exorbitant rents with less trouble, and practised their tyranny more tranquilly. Now these laws have been almost wholly abolished by the Whigs. They have only preserved in the government of Ireland a mere shadow of the coercion bill, a legal phantom, of which they make no use.

There are two principal reasons which compel every Tory administration to enforce these exceptional laws in Ireland: the first is, that these laws are demanded from them by the aristocracy on which they depend; and the second is, that their attainment of power revolts Ireland, and they are thus driven to violent means of repression. This is what renders a return to power so difficult to the Tories, for they would be forced at the very outset to establish a cruel and sanguinary system of rule in Ireland. This, also, is the great merit of the Whigs, that they can govern Ireland without having recourse to those odious laws, which violate common right and common humanity.

It must not be supposed that the Whig government

of Ireland does not repress the attacks made on the persons and properties of the rich. It represses them, but in a different way. In the first place, outrages are less frequent under Whig rule, because the rich, having less power and privilege, do not excite so much hatred; and then, when outrages are committed, the punishment of them is entrusted to the ordinary courts of justice.

This regular and moderate system of repression, the only one which the Whigs authorise, is, doubtless, unsatisfactory to the passions of the Irish aristocracy, accustomed to special protection, and which, through fear of a criminal being acquitted by a jury, exclaims that society is menaced with dissolution; that security of person and property no longer exists, that justice cannot have its course under the ordinary laws, and demands that the insurrection act should be immediately enforced.

Very lately the aristocracy of the county of Tipperary unanimously applied to the central government to have that county placed under the insurrection act, averring that such protection was necessary, in consequence of the systematic war waged by the poor against the person and the properties of the rich. But their request was refused, and the Whigs, justly persuaded that the outrages which desolate that country have been provoked by the selfishness and improvidence of the rich, had the courage to tell the aristocracy of Tipperary a great truth too long misunderstood in Ireland. They reminded the petitioners that property perils its rights when it neglects its duties.

Thus, the Whig government of Ireland, doubtless, does not destroy the political power of the aristocracy, but it combats that body; with the incomplete arms it possesses, it could not better sustain the struggle against so formidable an adversary as the aristocratic body; it could not more skilfully weaken the enemy which it is unable to destroy.

In fine, the Whigs are doubtless unable to effect all the reforms in Ireland which the safety of the country would require; they can only make political reforms, for which they are best adapted, of a partial and transitory nature; the religious reforms which they attempt are fundamentally wrong, since they leave untouched the base, the Anglican principle, which is the first grievance of Ireland; and they do not even attempt the reform of the civil privileges which are the soul of the aristocracy. But though the Whigs do not cure the evils of Ireland, they have at least the power of alleviating them; they gain time, they accustom England to attend to the country, and they expose to view its most hideous wounds.

Thus we may say, as a summary of all parties, the Radicals have never been tried, and Ireland knows not what to expect from them;—she has known the rule of the Tories, who can only drive her to revolt; —the Whigs do not give her satisfaction, but they keep her quiet.

## CHAPTER III.

GENERAL SURVEY OF THE STATE OF IRELAND—CONCLUSION—A GLANCE AT THE POLITICAL AND RELIGIOUS FUTURE OF THE COUNTRY.

THE facts are now known. We have seen with what evils unfortunate Ireland is afflicted;—how a bad aristocracy is the primary and permanent source of all its misfortunes;—what symptoms of resistance, and what elements of democracy, this bad government has produced in the country. We have also examined the means necessary to produce order and peace. Finally, we have investigated what England ought to do, and what probably she will not do; and we have seen that the English party, which is least incapable of governing Ireland, is nevertheless unable to accomplish the fundamental reforms required by the state of the country.

Now that the conditions of the problem are stated, what is to be its solution? What will be the consequence of such a state of things to Ireland and to England herself? What are we to conclude for the present;—what to conjecture for the future? Let us pause for a moment, and then advance slowly on the road of speculation and conjecture.

The state of affairs which we have described, is, doubtless, extraordinary and singularly complicated,

but it is still the clear result of circumstances. Ireland, convinced that her misery arises from her institutions, must wish to destroy them; England, who sees in her institutions the principal cause of prosperity and greatness, naturally desires to preserve them. The great difficulty then is, that the same political rule which is salutary to one people is pernicious to the other; and that one feels it must die of the government which is the very life of the other. If the laws which are dear to England are maintained, Ireland remains with all its sufferings and all its perils; if it is resolved that they should be cured, the only remedy that can be employed is painful to England. The difficulty, in fine, is, that two nations to whom a common system of rule is fatal, each requiring a different code of laws, are still obliged to live under the same constitution; and that, forming one and the same empire, they are subjected to a single authority, whose acts are salutary to the one, and ruinous to the other.

If England and Ireland have such opposite interests, and if it is so injurious to both to form a single people, it would seem that the only remedy would be, that they should separate, and form a distinct state, having its own nationality and proper government. This expedient would, doubtless, remove all difficulties, but we may boldly predict that it will not be adopted. In fact, it is sufficient to consider the geographical position of Ireland and England, to see that the latter will never renounce her sovereignty over the former. reland is a vital member of the British empire,—a

gangrened member, but one without which the empire could not exist. In truth, if any convulsion of the globe sank Ireland in the bottom of the seas, England might be strengthened by the loss; but whilst this country, holding the place of an arm to the body, keeps its present position in the ocean, England must assert supremacy over it.

In all times Ireland has been the aim of the enemies of England; she was so in the twelfth century; for history informs us, that the use which France might have made of her was one of the causes that induced the English kings to undertake her conquest. When, in the age of the Reformation, a plan was formed by Catholic Europe for striking at Protestantism in England, it was on Ireland that Spain cast her eyes, and it was on that country that the famous armada of Philip II. disembarked. It was to Ireland that Louis XIV. sent the army destined to aid the Catholic James II. in regaining the throne occupied by the Protestant William III. And when republican and democratic France struggled against the European coalition of which England was the soul, she could devise no surer means of success than to send an army to Ireland; and for this purpose she prepared three successive expeditions in less than two years. Assuredly these different attempts at invasion have not been prosperous, and Ireland has always so feebly seconded the efforts of strangers, that she cannot be reckoned as a certain ally to the enemies of England.

Still England sees Ireland too near her not to wish

to retain its management; she cannot consent to see a country isolated from her, from which she is only separated by a narrow strait, and whence an Irish or foreign army within sight of her shores might invade her territories in a few hours. And it is precisely because Ireland is Catholic and democratic, that aristocratic and Protestant England cannot leave her independent, and abandon her to her sympathies for nations whose political and religious institutions are repugnant to England, from the same causes that render them agreeable to Ireland. Independent of these considerations, what nation would consent to its own dismemberment? Does not every power, whose territory is diminished, appear to be on the decline? England, who would not consent at any price to the loss of Canada, which is fifteen hundred leagues from her, will assuredly not abandon Ireland, which seems like a portion of herself.

But, though we may regard it as certain that Ireland will never form a state separate from England, may it not happen that the two countries, remaining still united by political ties, might be legislatively separated; that is to say, be under the same imperial government, but have each its own parliament,—obey the same sovereign, yet have special laws adapted to their different interests? This parliamentary separation was, in 1833, the wish of nearly all Ireland; and at this very moment O'Connell declares that it is the only certain salvation for Ireland, if she does not obtain the reforms she requires from the English parliament.

We cannot confidently affirm that no such legislative separation will ever take place; in the first place, the fact proves it to be possible since it existed for six centuries previous to the legislative union in 1800; and it would, perhaps, be wrong to deduce an absolute objection from the servility and baseness of the old Irish parliaments, for if the parliament of Ireland were restored, might it not be established on a basis calculated to secure its independence?

But there are so many other grave and weighty objections to the re-establishment of the Irish legislature, that we may take it as nearly certain that it will never take place: this may be shown in a few words. Why does the English parliament not give Ireland the political and religious laws that she claims? It is not that the English legislators deem the institutions of Ireland the best that the country can have, but because they believe it dangerous to abolish them. They fear that the blow which levelled these institutions in a neighbouring country, would shake them at home; and that the law which struck at the aristocracy in one island, might affect the other by contagion of principle. Now, England would have precisely the same subjects of alarm, if Ireland obtained the power of making laws for herself.

When two nations are so close as England and Ireland, there can be no commotion in one which will not agitate the other. Under the publicity essential to the free institutions of Great Britain, each of the two nations must know every day what passes in the other. Now, supposing that the physical interests of

the two countries, such as commerce and manufactures, should not, as in former times, be a source of perpetual collisions between the two legislatures, would not the discussion of political questions alone produce great embarrassment, and serious disputes? What could England say or do, if, for instance, the Irish parliament, yielding to the wishes of the country, abolished the principle of the Anglican church; and, after having overturned the religious privileges of the aristocracy, destroyed its civil and political privileges, dismissed justices of the peace and grand juries, set aside the laws of entail and primogeniture, and removed all the impediments to a free trade in land? Does any one believe that the adoption of such measures in Ireland would not find a formidable echo in England, and rouse the conservative passions of that country? Would England, while she believes herself so interested in maintaining the aristocracy and established church at home, tamely view their abolition in a neighbouring country, and in a country too which forms part of her empire?

Evidently one of two things would happen; either the Irish parliament, through fear or corruption, would submit to the good pleasure of England; and whilst preserving the outward forms of an independent body, would only make such laws as would suit English taste; and in such a case we cannot see what advantage Ireland would derive from a legislature, the servile instrument of those from whose power she is anxious to escape. Or, the Irish parliament escaping such influences, would freely and boldly enter on an

examination of Irish grievances, and then England, seeing her own institutions attacked, at least indirectly, would hasten to deprive Ireland of a legislature. An Irish parliament sold to England is not desirable; an independent parliament is impossible. Thus, the two countries cannot be governed by different legislatures, and their parliamentary union must be considered as necessary as their political union.

Thus, England and Ireland, separated by their prejudices, their passions, and their political interests, are united by their destiny. With such different habits and opposite wants, they must adhere together, simply because, on the same day they rose side by side from the depths of ocean; like those monstrous twins, which, condemned by nature to form only one body and the same flesh, have, nevertheless, contrary tastes, and which incessantly afflicted with the desire of parting, are forced to move together, to live and die externally united, but internally discordant.

But what follows from this fatal union? Simply, that the weaker must yield to the stronger; in other terms, Ireland must accept the laws which it pleases England to impose. This is the reason why an established church and an aristocracy exist in Ireland. But are we to conclude from the preceding statements, that Ireland, interested in the destruction of these pernicious institutions, must endure them as long as England is resolved on their maintenance? Shall Ireland be condemned to eternal suffering, because the remedy for her grievances would alarm England? No—there is no reason for coming to so desponding a conclusion.

We may, doubtless, foresee that England will

endeavour to maintain her own constitution in Ireland. She believes it dangerous to govern that country otherwise than as she is governed herself; she will endeavour only to make such changes as will give her no cause of fear, and she will attempt to restrain the religious and democratic reform now running its course in that country. This is the system which she has pursued for centuries, and in which she is so deeply engaged, that we cannot see how she could abandon it. But whilst we foresee that she will aim at this object, we may be pretty sure that she will not attain it. For fifty years it has been the object of all her efforts, and they have all been fruitless.

When we consider what has been accomplished in Ireland within half a century, it is impossible not to discover that the institutions founded by the English in that country are attacked at the heart. These institutions breathed Protestantism only; it is undeniable, that the principle which animated them is in rapid decay. How will the destruction that has begun terminate? By what deeds and under what circumstances? Will it be slow or swift—peaceable or violent?—We cannot tell, but it is impossible not to see that it is in preparation, and will come to pass.

Ireland is a country essentially Catholic, and the legal lie which made it a Protestant country is now so shaken to its base, that it cannot long stand. We may, therefore, regard it as certain, that, in a given and no very distant time, the Anglican church will have ceased to be the official and public establishment of Ireland.

The question whether the Catholic religion will become the dominant creed in Ireland, like the Anglican in England, or the Presbyterian in Scotland, is a question of a different nature and of doubtful solution. We have already seen, that the predominance of Catholicism in Ireland would be an injury rather than a benefit to the country. Ireland already possesses religious liberty; what she wants to acquire, and what she doubtless will acquire, is equality of creeds. There are, however, some, who believe that the Anglican creed will long retain its supremacy in Ireland. The British constitution, say they, the fundamental principle of which is Anglican, would cease to exist if the church of Ireland were overthrown. The sovereigns of England, whose right to the throne is a Protestant right, could not consent to the destruction of the supremacy of the church in Ireland without a breach of their coronation oath. Finally, the Irish Catholics, who in 1829 obtained emancipation, on condition of respecting the church and its establishment, would be guilty of perjury if they demanded its ruin.

It would be a great mistake to suppose, that the powers which are working the overthrow of the established church in Ireland will be checked by any such obstacle. Even were the English constitution opposed to its ruin, I would not less believe in the fall of that church; but it is false to assert, that the existence of the British constitution depends on the maintenance of the established church in Ireland. It is one of the great advantages of this constitution, that, not being written, it can never be violated. All requisite

changes demanded by opinions or habits may be made without injuring it. This is the reason why Scotland became Presbyterian, and Canada continued Catholic, under the sceptre of England, without any violation of the English constitution. Similar changes in the constitution, so far from destroying it, may be considered as means of its preservation. And why should anybody dwell upon the charge of perjury urged against the Catholics of Ireland, as having obtained large reforms on the condition of asking for no further changes? If the Irish Catholics, in 1829, promised to be contented with parliamentary emancipation, they assuredly made the most insane engagement that can well be imagined; it would be as if they had sworn not to fight so soon as they should be supplied with weapons. And the legislators, who from necessity, not from justice, ceded emancipation on such conditions, would not have been less destitute of common sense: it would have been as if they had said to the Catholics of Ireland: you are already so strong, that we are obliged to cede what we would not give you freely; consequently, we are going to increase your power, on condition that you will never make use of it. These conditions, which it would have been as absurd to offer as to accept, had they been seriously stipulated and taken, would still be purely chimerical. The oaths which a man takes voluntarily, are of value sometimes; those imposed by a party never.

If nothing can stop the reform of the Irish church, the reform of the aristocracy advances not less surely. The members of this aristocracy are always strangers

in Ireland; they act as at the time when the conquerors of Ireland had only barbarous hordes to contend against; and yet they are now in presence of a well-disciplined people, guided by a great leader, and conscious of their strength.

The aristocracy of Ireland has from the beginning united its cause to that of England, and its destiny seems to be to live and die with it. Will another aristocracy be constructed on the ruins of that which is crumbling into dust? It is very difficult to tell. The tendencies of the English spirit lead to such a result, but the passions produced and maintained by a detested aristocracy may be an obstacle. And the more this antinational aristocracy will resist the blows directed against it, the more the sentiment opposed to every aristocracy will be strengthened in Ireland; for it is the special hate which it inspires, that blights the privileges of birth and fortune in a country naturally disposed to respect both. It may thus be said, that the system of the Tories which tends to maintain the existing aristocracy intact and inviolable in Ireland, is at the same time the best calculated to ensure its complete ruin, and to prevent its transportation into any other aristocracy; whilst should such a change be made, it will be favoured by the Whigs, who, by reforming the Irish aristocracy, will render it less unpopular, and accustom the Catholics of Ireland to the injustice of privileges, by giving them a share of their advantages.

But if a Catholic aristocracy does not succeed the Protestant aristocracy, which is doomed to perish,

what power shall then take its place? Will the government of Ireland become democratic? When we just now showed how the Tory party excites the hatred of the people against the privileged, we at the same time showed how the same party might, in certain cases, aid the development of democracy. But if this democracy triumphs, how will it be established? Under what circumstances? Will it be by a violent revolution, or by a slow and gentle process? Whether it should be by violence or by peaceful means, how can it be constituted in spite of England, who believes herself interested in resisting it? When we consider the passions of Catholic Ireland, it is hard to avoid coming to the conclusion, that the long obstinacy of the Tory party to maintain the privileges of the church and the aristocracy entire, will produce in that country the chances of a general insurrection. What will be the effects of such a revolt? How far will the passions of the people go? Will they attack persons only, or will they likewise assail institutions? And what will England do? How can she leave such an insurrection unpunished, and how can she chastise an entire nation? Supposing that a new government should emanate from tranquil progress or revolutionary changes,—what will be its form? what its principles? what equality will it give the citizens,—that belonging to despotism, or that peculiar to free institutions? Here is a multitude of questions which we can only state, and the solution of which belong to futurity.

But though we cannot tell what power will succeed the Anglican aristocracy in Ireland, we may assume it

as certain, that this aristocracy will fall, and it seems impossible not to regard its overthrow as near and imminent. Vainly will the English government endeavour to avert this double ruin of the Protestant church and aristocracy of Ireland; whatever it may be, whether Whig or Tory, it will not have the power; it will succeed neither by prudent reforms nor by blind resistance, neither by wisdom nor by force.

England, no doubt, is far superior in strength to Ireland, and the latter would be mad to enter into a struggle of rivalry with the former. She would be insane, not merely if she wished to dictate laws to England, but even if she attempted to escape from her sovereignty: woe be to her, if ever she enters upon such a strife! But there is a great difference between the feeble engaging in an attack and making a defence. The weak, when oppressed, find a great auxiliary force in the sanctity of the cause, whilst the powerful oppressor is seriously weakened by the injustice which he practises, and of which he himself is conscious. Now England may believe it useful to her own interests to impose upon Ireland institutions pernicious to the latter; but she cannot think such a proceeding just, and the very doubt of her right is a source of weakness. On the contrary, when Ireland resists the violence offered her, she has the sense of the wrong committed towards her, and is sustained by the feeling. Thus, it seems, that a long system of injustice tends to equalise the power of the oppressor and the oppressed, and that the courage of the latter increases as the energy of the tyrant is diminished.

England would rise as one man against Ireland attempting to break the political chain by which both countries are united. But when Ireland limits herself to resisting the persecutions and rigours of a political selfishness, when she causes to be heard the mournful accents of the starving poor, and the groans of the suffering oppressed, England is divided, and the great people, which would be all powerful to subdue a rebellious subject, wants strength to crush a victim. This is the secret of English weakness when opposed to poor Ireland, supported by her unmerited misfortunes. Here is the explanation of the past and the revelation of the future. This is the reason why, even at the time of her greatest relative inferiority, Ireland has always been a source of embarrassment and a menace to England.

And the time is approaching, if it has not already come, when Ireland will not be strong in her rights alone. Her population, which increases more rapidly than that of England, increases the power of the weaker, and diminishes the power of the stronger. Ireland is no longer the petty nation of eight or nine hundred thousand inhabitants, beaten down by the mere nod of Henry VIII. or Elizabeth; she at present contains eight millions of inhabitants, full half of what England, Scotland, and Wales, contain together: and the time is not far distant, when England, taken by herself, will not be numerically stronger than Ireland. Then, though the first will, doubtless, be infinitely more powerful than the second, we must not forget what a superiority of forces is requisite to exer-

cise an oppression, which weakens the one, and lessens the inferiority of the other.

Besides, let us take care not to look upon England and Ireland as two countries standing alone in the world, and everything to each other. It is very true, that England is at present everything to Ireland, which as yet has only an existence relative to England; but the same does not hold good for England, who has the care of maintaining the power which she has established in both hemispheres. Thus, Ireland pursuing only one political object, the reform of her institutions, and in contact with only one people, that which opposes this reform;—Ireland, I say, unites all her forces against a single adversary, and brings to the combat, without diversion, truce, or relaxation, all her physical strength and moral power; whilst England, in her political relations, engaged with a thousand different interests, is forced to divide her strength. The resistance which Ireland opposes to England is constant, and must increase; the force which the latter brings to bear against the former is variable, and subject to very large reductions in extraordinary times.

We must take these mutual relations of England and Ireland into our consideration to understand how a feeble nation has been enabled to contend successfully against a powerful people, and how it may reckon on similar success for the future. Strong in its just cause, constant progress, continuous efforts directed to a single object, and all the accidental embarrassments which arise to trammel its adversary, Ireland advances steadily on her road; sometimes she obtains

from England an act of half justice, sometimes a valuable concession; one day a boon is granted to her on calculation, which had been refused to her as a right; concessions are alternately made to the pity inspired by her misfortunes, and the alarm produced by her agitations; and thus England is led, half reluctantly and half voluntarily, to overthrow in Iréland the edifice she would wish to maintain. Should the future seem doubtful, let us consult the past.

England was not less anxious fifty years ago than she is now, to preserve in their integrity her aristocratic and religious institutions in Ireland; and at that epoch the relative weakness of Ireland was far greater than in our days. Still it is from this time that the greatest advantages obtained by England over Ireland are dated. From 1775 to 1793, that is to say, nearly twenty years, it would seem as if Ireland held England in check; it would seem as if the latter, which had hitherto refused to cede anything to Ireland, had taken the part of granting everything; —and why? Because England was then in all the embarrassments of her power; braved in North America, menaced in India, at war with France and Spain: hence the Irish emancipations of 1778 and 1782; England gave Ireland her liberties at the same time that the American colonies took theirs. On the day that revolutionary France, declaring war against Europe, made England comprehend the necessity of being at peace within herself, she gave new liberties to Ireland: hence the emancipation of 1793.

Finally, when England conceded parliamentary

emancipation in 1829, she candidly confessed that she granted it, not because it was just, but because it was necessary. And what was this necessity? To prevent the general insurrection of Ireland, which seemed imminent.

The situation of England is doubtless deplorable, having neither the power to be equitable to Ireland, nor the strength to refuse her justice; merciless in the period of her power, and generous only in the days of her weakness; rejecting one day as impious and sacrilegious the reforms which she executes the next as necessary. She thus sees destroyed peace-meal, year after year, by concession after concession, and necessity after necessity, all the institutions she is anxious to preserve in Ireland. Every day must render this work of destruction more rapid and more irresistible. The nation to which concessions are made, not because they are just, but because they are necessary, learns an inevitable lesson. Warned that she has nothing to expect from the equity of her rulers, Ireland labours only to show them her strength; hence when O'Connell wants anything, he preaches agitation, and rouses seven millions of people as a Laputan flapper, proper to fix the attention of England.

And yet this sad system of concessions, wrested from fear or weakness, or sometimes from pity, seems the only one which under present circumstances England can pursue towards Ireland.

We have elsewhere seen for what reasons it would be impossible for England to execute peaceably and freely the reforms which Ireland requires. She can-

not effect these reforms, because if one part of her population wished to render justice to Ireland, there is another part whose political and religious passions would require that the oppression of Ireland should be continued. Now these passions and prejudices, which would be roused against a logical and spontaneous reform, would yield to a reform imposed by necessity, and bow to superior force. England pardons her government for being weak, and even powerless, before the exigencies of Ireland; she would not pardon her government for immolating, merely at the wish of the country, the institutions entrusted to its care; there are reforms which the Whigs would not be allowed to effect as just and national, which England would allow to be accomplished by the Tories as deplorable but necessary.

Thus, the English institutions established in Ireland are crumbling to ruin, in spite of the efforts England makes for their preservation. These institutions must fall, and we may affirm that they will not be overthrown in Ireland, without the same institutions existing in England receiving a severe shock from their crash.

England would commit a great error if she believed that this mixed system of resistance and successive concessions will save her from the perils to which, perhaps not without reason, she believes that she will be exposed, if she openly and directly reformed the institutions of Ireland. She would strangely impose on herself if, because she insists on the maintenance of her institutions in Ireland, she believes that she

will escape the irresistible contagion which is overthrowing them. A very little reflection should be sufficient to convince her that her own church and her own aristocracy will be more shaken by the slow and disputed overthrow of the Irish church and aristocracy, than by their immediate and complete reform.

Of what value is the fiction which supposes these institutions stable in Ireland, if England incessantly hears the blows directed against them, and the cries of alarm raised by their partisans? It is in vain that England, satisfied with her church and aristocracy, denies that Ireland ought to be similarly satisfied, if the miseries of the country murmur a perpetual accusation against the church and aristocracy, which finds an echo in England.

Fears are entertained for the English church, if that of Ireland should be overthrown; the latter, consequently, is preserved. But what is the consequence? Simply that England hears every day that a church exists in Ireland, detested by the people; a church gorged with gold, abuses, and vices, receiving enormous revenues for the benefit of a few Protestants, whilst the mass of the people, profoundly wretched, has no provision for public worship. England hears these discourses repeated in a thousand forms. One day it is the sinecures of the Irish church that are denounced; another, the enormous incomes of the bishops: sometimes a revolt of the people against the exactions of the clergy is announced; sometimes a dissertation is published, proving, without much diffi-

culty, the legitimacy of the rebellion. When Ireland is insurgent, how will the revolt be appeased? All England asks the question of itself. Do the Whigs propose reform as a remedy? It must be discussed. Do the Tories propose coercive measures? They must be discussed likewise. Vainly is the question raised by these vicious institutions eluded; it returns on all sides in spite of every effort, and perseveres in troubling England in her repose: if violent means are adopted to quell the insurrection, the cries of sorrow from the scaffold in Ireland resound through England, and are more tormenting than conscientious scruples in favour of the church and the aristocracy.

It would be surprising if English imaginations, once directed to such a subject, stopped at Ireland. Many who do not see at the first glance the difference between the religious state of England and Ireland, are disposed to believe that the monstrous abuses in the church of the latter are not without a parallel in the church of the former. Is not the scandal of ecclesiastical sinecures the same in Ireland as in England? Do not the higher clergy possess inordinate wealth there also? Is not the 20,000*l.* a year possessed by the Archbishop of Armagh, less than the 30,000*l.* enjoyed by the Archbishop of Canterbury? Is it not as absurd in England as it is in Ireland, that edifices for the Anglican worship should be built and supported at the expense of Dissenters? Is it not equally bad in England and Ireland, that the church should have large landed estates fettered to sterility in its hands?

Is it not a bad system, that ministers of religion should perform the functions of justices of peace in both countries, and throw into prison the person to whom they are appointed as spiritual guides and directors?

All these questions are now debated in England.—And how are they raised? By the state of Ireland, by the eternal complaints which that country raises, and her constant agitation to reject a religious system imposed by force, and maintained by violence. How many clamours, always followed by the same echoes, how many similar commotions, always producing the same reaction, will be necessary to shake the church in England, which is tottering in Ireland? We cannot tell; but may we not assert, that no institution is so firm as to resist such causes of ruin? And all these perils, which the political system pursued towards Ireland accumulates against the church, are not less menacing to the English aristocracy.

When it is incessantly repeated in England, that there exists a class of persons in Ireland called *the landlords*, or *the rich*, against which the hatred and the curses of the people are incessantly directed;—that these rich landlords use their wealth and power only to crush and plunder the feeble;—that, odious to the people, but friends to the church, they have made with that institution a selfish bargain, of which the ruin of the people is the object;—when England learns that the great Irish lords, who have no sympathy for the sufferings of the poor man, derive from his sweat and toil the means of their luxury and ostenta-

tion;—when every day she hears that men invested with the public authority arbitrarily imprison the citizens, administer the laws without comprehending them;—that, from want of moral authority, they know of no influence but that of the jailer or the hangman; and that from their ignorance, cupidity, imprudence, and selfishness, they have rendered themselves so odious to the nation, as to be reduced to the necessity of either flying a country that abhors them, or living there in constant fear when they do not fall victims to hatred or vengeance; when, I say, such facts, which the press invariably registers, and still further exaggerates, constantly reach the ears of the English people, is it not to be supposed that they, struck by the accusations against the aristocracy of Ireland, will be naturally led to inquire whether that of England is not subject to similar reproaches?

The English aristocracy is, doubtless, different from that of Ireland. But however good we may suppose it to be, it still contains within itself enough of vices, it is subject to enough of errors, it contains enough of selfishness, for Irish grievances to present some analogy with grievances in England; for whoever, in the latter country, suffers from an excess, a fault, or a weakness of the aristocracy, is induced to apply to its condition what is truly urged against the aristocracy of Ireland, and to be tempted to hate that institution at home as much as the other is odious in the neighbouring country? England, which, in order to continue Anglican and aristocratic, forces Ireland to remain so likewise, does not consider what danger there is in this solemn

voice of a people, which incessantly exclaims, that the Anglican church is the most odious of all religious systems, and aristocracy the worst of all governments?

Thus, not only will England fail to maintain the Anglican church and aristocracy in Ireland, but the blows which she aims at that country will rebound against herself and shake her own institutions! and this influence of Ireland, which re-acts on England, and sends back hatred in return for bad laws, does not merely act in a moral and indirect way. Ireland, well aware that England would not violently impose upon her the rule of the aristocracy and the Anglican church, if such rule were not her own, labours to attack the institutions of England, and the important share she has in the parliamentary representation of Great Britain supplies her with the means.

The influence of the Irish members is, and necessarily must be, democratic; and it is natural that they should embrace every opportunity which is offered to them of assailing, by their votes, not only the aristocratic institutions of Ireland, but those of England: not that they are very eager for the ruin of the English aristocracy, but because they know that if it were overthrown, or even weakened, the factitious aristocracy of Ireland would fall to pieces of itself. Now this radical character of the Irish representatives exercises, and is calculated to exercise in future, the most extraordinary influence on the destinies of England.

We have already said, that England, if left to herself, would be disposed to preserve her own institutions, if not intact, at least nearly such as they are; and it

is certain that, in the present parliament, the English members, if alone, would give the majority to the Conservative party. Whence does it happen, then, that this party is not in possession of the government? Because, in the nearly balanced state of English parties, the Irish representatives, by joining the Whigs, give the majority to their side. Thus England, which really holds Ireland under her yoke, is still forced, by the influence of that country, to renounce the government she prefers, and to submit to a party by which, on the whole, she is not represented.

Friendly as she is to repose, Conservative England would not remain motionless, if she could direct her actions according to her own pleasure. The nature of her government, her habits of liberty, the spirit of discussion which has passed from her religion into her habits, the varied interests she contains, which, too timid to yield very much, are too enlightened to refuse yielding at all,—everything would incline her to a slow, peaceful, and progressive reform of her institutions.

But whilst she wishes to advance mildly and prudently in the path of reform, she is forced to advance with rapid strides. Whence comes this violence? From the contingent contributed to her representation by a nation to which in other respects she dictates the laws. It is now very generally acknowledged, that the famous reform bill of 1832 would not have been carried by the representatives of England alone, and that its success is mainly attributable to the Irish members. And it seems that every day, the demo-

cratic influence of Ireland in the British parliament is on the increase. At the late election of 1837, England, which is in a reaction against reform, elected a greater number of Conservatives than there were in the preceding parliament, and Ireland more Radicals

Everything seems to show, that for a long time the parliamentary representation of the two countries will follow these opposite tendencies, because the question will every day be more urgent between the grave interest which England has, not to hasten the democratic movement, and the imperious necessity which Ireland feels to precipitate it.

May not a formidable collision arise between the passions constant in their attack, and the interests determined on resistance?

Will not the singular desire that England feels to stop short in the road on which she is hurried onward by Ireland, produce in the long-run some extreme resolution in the English people? It is already evident, that England feels a secret reluctance to be dragged in the train of Ireland. The idea that she is subject to such influence annoys her; she feels her pride wounded, because an obstacle to her natural march arises from a people she is accustomed to despise. Besides, from the repetition of attacks, the conservative interests of England have taken alarm. Reforms always succeeding to reforms, and concessions to concessions, a time arrives when the aristocracy, right or wrong, deems that it should yield no further, and that henceforth it is reduced to the alternative of resisting, or ceasing to exist.

Might it not then, happen, that the party which by its nature is most attached to peace, may some day see that there is no safety for it but in war, and convinced that if it does not revolt, it will be killed by inches, it should engage its enemy by open force at the risk of a sudden and violent death?

It is not merely a collision between England and Ireland that is rendered possible by this conflict of interests and passions, but also an engagement between the English parties themselves, one of which is irritated by the support that Ireland gives to the other. Recourse to arms is not a proceeding familiar to political parties in England; it may be generally said, that all disputes in that country are solved constitutionally. Still, who can give an assurance that England will never swerve from legal paths?

Those who saw England in 1832 will, perhaps, hesitate in answering this question. At that time the resistance of the Tory party engendered such ardent and unanimous passions in favour of reform, that England might have been supposed on the eve of a revolution. Insurrection was openly mentioned, plans for a campaign were prepared, leaders were chosen; it is even said that generals were nominated for the national army. The aristocracy having yielded, the river has returned to its bed, but what would the consequence have been, were the national torrent resisted?

Now, would it not be possible that the English nation, having made a movement to obtain reform, should commence a new agitation to arrest its course?

Already, in 1835, at the period when the re-action in England against the movement of 1835 began to make itself felt, the conservative party, impatient of the reforms announced by the Whigs, who still retained possession of power, raised the cry of *war*. Nothing less seemed designed than an appeal to the *Cavaliers* against the *Roundheads*. This challenge had then no result; but may not violence some day follow from such a menace?

It is thus that the impetuous wind from Ireland, breathing democracy over England, brings upon her the chances of civil war. It is thus that the attempt to support in Ireland a system of government which the country rejects, produces a sort of oppression to England herself. It is thus that England, whilst she forcibly imposes her institutions on Ireland, is menaced with their loss at home. A strange and grave situation, in whichever way it is viewed. To Ireland the more terrible, to England the more weighty in responsibility; more simple though more laborious for Ireland, because, having only one interest and one duty, she need not hesitate on the road she follows, though dragged along bleeding from wounds and tortures; more complicated for England, which, loaded with a thousand burthens, can neither carry nor throw off the weight of Ireland,—which, sure to conquer whenever she combats Ireland, gains only barren victories, and ruins herself whilst she ruins the unhappy country; and, in the midst of her rigours to the unhappy land, always dubious of her own cause. Stimulated by selfishness, and in turn restrained by conscience, she

vainly tries to be always wise and always just. A situation vast and covered with darkness, in which the mind labours, wearies, wanders; where all that at present seems necessary to be undertaken, is found impossible; and for which we can discover in the future only sad and incomplete solutions, until the period, far or less distant from us, when the democratic principle, which is working its way through the world, and which reaches England not only through the passions of Ireland, but also the general movement of the whole human race, shall have overthrown aristocracy in England, and, by introducing into that country the only institutions which Ireland can endure, rendered possible an accordance between two people condemned to a common life, and which at present are no more able to unite than they are to separate.

### *Final Reflections.*

In the midst of all the miseries, all the perils, and all the complications of which we have drawn so mournful a picture, one consoling aspect is offered to our view.

Whence have these embarrassments, perils, and difficulties, which her greatest statesmen are all but unable to solve, come upon England?—From Ireland: from Ireland, unfortunate and oppressed; on which England formerly practised a severe and selfish conquest; which England cruelly attacked in her religious liberty, after having deprived the country of political liberty; from Ireland, held during centuries

under a yoke of iron, and subjected, without relaxation, to the most odious persecutions ever invented by the most ingenious tyranny.

And it is this people, crushed by so much oppression, and degraded by so much servitude,—this people so often mutilated, broken, and trampled under foot by England; it is this people, a victim by turns to every form of calamity, foreign and civil wars, massacres and exiles, the sword that slays, the gold that corrupts, the law that persecutes;—it is this people, rent in sunder by eternal convulsions, and decimated by annual famines,—it is this people of paupers, this people of rags, this people of slaves, that now becomes to its tyrants a source of embarrassment and peril!

Assuredly, here is matter of grave meditation for rulers and for nations. Does it not show that violence and corruption are bad engines of government? Does it not show that every system of policy, to be good, must begin by being just, and that in the art of guiding nations, as in the science which serves individuals to guide themselves, no separation should be made between honesty and policy?

There are occurring at this moment, amongst the two greatest nations that ocean separates, two phenomena of the same nature, which deserve to engage the attention of the world.

The United States of North America are beyond contradiction the most fortunate nation on earth: in no country are the conditions of society so equal and so prosperous; no land advances so rapidly to the power conferred by wealth and industry; nowhere is

the progress of humanity so constant and so extraordinary. Still, in the midst of this marvellous prosperity, shining with so bright a splendour, a frightful stain appears; this body, so young, so healthy, so robust, bears a deep and hideous wound. The United States possess slaves. Vainly in that christian land do religion and humanity devote themselves with admirable virtue to heal this fearful evil; the leprosy is extending, it is blighting pure institutions, it is poisoning the felicity of the present generation, and already depositing the seeds of death in a body full of life.

At the same time that the United States in America are making fruitless efforts to expel the negro race from their bosom, because their slavery troubles and humiliates them; the nation, which is probably the best skilled in the art of government in Europe, England, exhausts herself in useless efforts to shake off a nation which she took six centuries to conquer, and struggles vainly under the miseries of her slave.

And how have these two nations reached situations so sad and so similar?—By the same roads,—by a primary act of violence, followed by a long course of injustice.

America and England would indeed gladly abandon these pernicious paths which terminate in such frightful abysses. But it is not so easy to escape from the pernicious and dark road which has so long been followed; long deviations and tedious retracing of steps are necessary for such a purpose. When the solemn violations of morality and justice have been continued for centuries, the deep perturbation which they

have produced in moral order must endure long after they have ceased. It is not sufficient that the tyrant, who believed tyranny useful to his interests, should recognise his error in order that he should escape the consequences of his iniquity. It does not depend on the greater or less intelligence of selfishness to suspend or prolong the responsibility of its actions. From the moment that oppression has begun to exist, the oppression has incurred the fatal penalty. This law is severe, but it is just and sublime; there is a happiness in recognising that selfishness, injustice, and violence bring with them retributions as infallible as their excesses.

There are those who believe that individuals and nations are led by fatality to crime. The opinion is false; it is injurious to humanity, which, by such a theory, cannot be acquitted of crime without being deprived of virtue. The crimes of nations, like those of individuals, are voluntary, not necessary acts. There is nothing necessary but the consequence of crimes; nothing predestined but their expiation.

# NOTES.

## CHAPTER I.

1. Tithes were, however, debated more for the mode in which they were levied, than the purpose to which they were applied.

2. The Irish parliament did not scruple to rob the church of the tithe of agistment.

3. This is a pretty accurate picture of what occurred at Rathcormack in 1834.

4. Similar circumstances occurred in other English markets.

5. See the Works of the late Bishop of Limerick.

## CHAPTER V.

1. See Historical Introduction respecting Whiteboys.

2. See ditto.

3. The new tenant, not the landlord, is the usual object of Whiteboy vengeance.

4. See Sir John Davis's Inquiry.

5. See Historical Introduction—Penal laws.

6. The translator has often been thus answered.

7. A perceptible improvement has recently taken place.

8. Temperance societies are now patronised by many of the Catholic priests.

9. See the last Parliamentary Report on Combinations.

10. "Inquiry into the causes why Ireland was imperfectly conquered."

11. The charity of the poor Irish to each other is without a parallel.

## CHAPTER VI.—Section I.

1. The government, however, prosecuted Swift's printer.

2. Gordon's History of Ireland, vol. ii.

3. Interference on the part of the government is now rare.

4. Delegation was, however, prohibited by an act of parliament.

5. Wright had a note in his possession written in French; the sheriff was ignorant of the language, but he concluded that everything written in French must be treasonable..

6. He was subsequently reimbursed.

7. See Irish State Trials.

8. See Lord Lorton's Letters.

## CHAPTER VII.—Section I.

1. By O'Connell and Shiel.

2. The proceedings of the committee are not always recognised by the general body.

3. The Pilot.

4. This was deemed an essential part of the measure of emancipation, which it was supposed would have passed at the same time.

5. This measure may, however, be abandoned; its relinquishment is very desirable.

6. It also honoured freeholders who voted against their landlords.

### Section II.

1. O'Connell succeded Keogh.

2. This was said by Mr. Plunkett, then Attorney-General, now Lord Plunkett.

3. See Parliamentary Report on the State of Ireland, 1825.

4. This step was suggested by the late Mr. Leader.

5. The representation of the Irish counties has been almost wholly wrested from the landlords.

5. The notion has been abandoned.

6, 7, 8. See Sir W. Horton's Tracts on Emigration.

9. The emigration of Protestants of the middle class is increasing.

### Section III.

1, 2. The contrast is not quite fair.

3. The law promises to work well; so far as it has been tried, the results have been beneficial.

4. This evil has not yet arisen.

5. This is exaggerated.

6, 7, 8, 9. These doubts do not appear to be justified, so far as the Poor Laws have yet been tried.

## CHAPTER III.

1. The alliance was hollow and insincere.

2. John Keogh.

## CHAPTER IV.—Section I.

1. This occurred in 1525.—See Lingard's History.

2. See Mr. Leon Foucher's *brochure* on the Division of Land in France.

3. This plan is proposed amongst others by Von Raumer.

## PART IV.—CHAPTER I.

1. O'Connell's reception in Edinburgh was a triumph rather than an ovation.

THE END.

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